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Man killed in Ramallah explosion

By MARGOT DUKKEVITCH,
 MOHAMMED NAJIB,
 and ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

A Palestinian man was killed in an explosion close to the headquarters of West Bank Preventive Security chief Jibril Rajoub in Ramallah's industrial zone last night.

Palestinian intelligence and Preventive Security officials said it was unclear what caused the blast, which occurred close to 10 p.m. They were unable to confirm reports that it had been a car bomb or whether others had been injured.

Army radio said two people were killed, and that there were injuries as well.

IDF officials said the explosion appeared to have been from a car bomb, but did not rule out the possibility it was the result of a "work accident" by people preparing a bomb.

There were no IDF forces near the site, IDF sources said.

The blast, according to the Associated Press, blew up a section of a nearby building, sending huge blocks of concrete flying through the air. Several fire trucks and ambulances converged on the scene.

Navy officer injured in sea mishap

By ARIEH O'SULLIVAN

A naval officer was critically injured in a freak accident at sea yesterday when a large wave swept across the deck of his vessel and knocked him down, the IDF said.

The tragedy happened in stormy seas off the coast of Ashkelon. The officer, whose name was withheld pending notification of his family, was treated by the ship's doctor, the IDF said.

Despite the rough waters, an IAF helicopter succeeded in evacuating the officer, a lieutenant junior grade who served as the deck officer, to Sheba Hospital at Tel Hashomer.

A doctor said that the officer had massive hemorrhaging in the neck and a critical head wound.

OC Navy Adm. Alex Tal appointed an inquiry into the accident immediately after the ship returned to port, the IDF said.

It was the second serious accident to hit the navy in recent weeks.

Elias Freij, 81

Elias Freij, the long-time mayor of Bethlehem and a Palestinian Authority tourism minister for three years, died yesterday in Amman. He was 81.

Freij, who was Bethlehem mayor from 1972 until last May, when he resigned both his mayoral and PA posts, was the only elected Palestinian mayor who was not eventually deposed by the Israeli military authorities for pro-PLO leanings. He was also the only mayor to remain in office after the PA took control.

Freij was one of the first Palestinian leaders to promote dialogue with Israel. He was considered pro-Jordan until the Oslo agreements and was a leading moderate who met frequently with both Labor and Likud leaders. *Jerusalem Post Staff*



Palestinian workers clean the rubble out of a mikve (ritual bath), a part of the oldest synagogue ever found, which was recently discovered near Jericho. (Reuters)

World's oldest synagogue unearthed near Jericho

By ABRAHAM RABINOVICH

The oldest synagogue yet uncovered, a structure dating to about 75-50 BCE, has been excavated near Jericho.

Unearthed by archaeologist Ehud Netzer of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in the Hasmonean winter palace complex near the banks of Wadi Kelt, the synagogue emerges onto the Jericho plain. It predates by more than 30 years the oldest previously known synagogue, at Gamla in the Golan Heights.

Netzer, who had excavated the palace in the decades after the Six Day War, returned to the site in January after an absence of 10 years. He found the synagogue beneath the ruins of a palace built by King Herod late in the first century BCE. The synagogue itself had been destroyed by an earthquake in 31 BCE,

along with the rest of the Hasmonean complex.

Until the current generation, it had been assumed that synagogues did not exist before the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, since none had ever been found. However, in 1963, Yizael Yadin identified a synagogue atop Masada which had been built shortly before the temple's destruction. Another synagogue from the same period was found shortly afterwards at Herodion by Franciscan archaeologists. Shmaryahu Gutman found the older Gamla synagogue in the 1980s.

The Jericho structure, measuring 17x11 meters, is similar to the one on Gamla, said Netzer. The room is lined by colonnades on all four sides. The pillars were spaced along a base some 40-50 centimeters high which lined the entire room and served also as a bench on which the

congregation sat. In one corner, a niche was cut into the wall. Netzer believes it may have served to store Torah scrolls.

The synagogue was part of a complex that included a small courtyard, a ritual bath (mikve), and several small rooms. One of these rooms contained a large U-shaped bench which was evidently used for ceremonial meals.

The site lies in an area defined in the Oslo Accords as Area C, which is under Israeli control. It is just a few hundred meters from Area A, which is under Palestinian control.

Netzer said that even if the finds had been in Area A, an appendix to the Oslo agreement requires Palestinian archaeologists to consult with Israeli archaeologists before excavating a site known to contain remains of the Jewish past.

Pullout deal stalls on reciprocity

By JAY BUSHINSKY,
 MARGOT DUKKEVITCH,
 and MOHAMMED NAJIB

US envoy Dennis Ross failed to pin down during talks here the size of the redeployment on the West Bank due to an impasse over the issue of Palestinian reciprocity.

Israel expects the Palestinian Authority to respond to the pullback from parts of Area C with a concomitant implementation of its undertakings on security matters.

David Bar-Ilan, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's communications adviser, said the third round of talks with Ross focused on Israel's security requirements and the reciprocity issue.

But he lamented that PA Chairman Yasser Arafat "did not give Ross an answer" to that question. He hoped a positive response would come at the session Ross was scheduled to hold with him last night.

Ross intends to fly to Cairo this morning to discuss the peace process with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and return to Israel this afternoon for another meeting with Netanyahu. He is also scheduled to meet with Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, who returned from Washington last night.

However, no further meetings are scheduled with Arafat because he is due to visit the Netherlands today.

"If Ross finds reason to stay another day, he will be able to see Arafat on Tuesday," Bar-Ilan said. Ross is believed to be flying to Cairo in the hope that Mubarak will urge Arafat to comply with Israel's demand for reciprocity.

"Without reciprocity, there can be no talk of percentages," Bar-Ilan said.

A senior government official denied that a special committee has been set up to demarcate future boundaries between Israel and the PA when the final-status talks are conducted. "The idea was discussed, but there was no decision,"

the official said.

At the weekly cabinet meeting, Netanyahu reported on his first two meetings with Ross, stressing that a percentage was not discussed at either session.

Instead, he said, the talks focused on the requisite conditions for continuing the peace process. The overriding issue was reciprocity.

He said Israel insists on fulfillment of the Palestinians' obligations in accordance with the "Letter for the Record" appended to the Hebron Agreement.

"We demand a clear linkage between the phases of withdrawal and the implementation of the Palestinians' commitments," he said.

Arafat, Kahalani discuss peace, car thefts, Page 2

He said Israel is holding to the view that it has the sole prerogative to determine the extent of the IDF's projected redeployment in terms of its security requirements.

National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon warned the cabinet that a pullback of more than 9% would cause grave damage to Israel's security.

He added that a withdrawal from 6% of the territory was really the limit beyond which security would be impaired. However, he went on, since a 9% pullback has already been discussed in Washington it could be implemented, "in view of the bind the government has gotten itself into. Anything beyond that would do grave harm to security."

He proposed that reciprocity be implemented in conjunction with the proposals for phased withdrawal, that is, for each sector evacuated by the IDF the Palestinians perform a specific deed, such as reducing the numbers of their police force and ultimately abrogating the Palestinian Covenant.

However, he recommended that the IDF prepare for a deterioration in the situation, including a unilateral declaration of Palestinian statehood.

Sharon met with Ross for some two hours, in a meeting initiated by US officials. Neither man would discuss what was said.

In Gaza, Arafat said that issues raised by Ross were still being discussed, but Palestinian officials hinted that the Palestinian leadership may approve the US proposal as long as there is a halt to settlement activities and the assurance of a third redeployment.

Others, however, suggested it would be preferable to support the European initiative, charging that the US appears to be sailing in forwarding its proposal.

Nabil Shaath, the PA Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, said the EU would announce the European initiative at a meeting scheduled to be held later today in Brussels.

"The European initiative is very clear and supports the Palestinian position and wants the US to present its initiative, but the US has failed to do so," he charged.

Shaath and PA negotiator Hassan Asfour went to Egypt yesterday. They were scheduled to meet with Foreign Minister Amr Moussa and Mubarak's political adviser Dr. Osama el-Baz to discuss the US proposal.

Prior to his departure, Shaath said that the discussions with Ross would remain secret until a clear proposal is formulated. This would then be presented before the PA and the PLO executive committee.

Arafat, meanwhile, said he welcomed a US proposal calling for a summit meeting to be hosted by US President Bill Clinton, with Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Britain, Tunisia, Oman, Jordan, Egypt, Israel, and the Palestinians participating.

See PULLOUT, Page 2

US can't afford failure

ANALYSIS

By JAY BUSHINSKY

Ross will throw the diplomatic ball back into US President Bill Clinton's court, while at the same time looking toward Secretary of State Madeleine Albright for a clue as to the US' next move.

Neither Clinton nor Albright can afford an American failure, however.

It is easier for Albright to talk about "walking away" from the Israeli-Palestinian problem than it is for the US to create a diplomatic vacuum that could be filled by its rivals in the global arena — the European Union and Russia.

It is hard to decipher Albright's emotion-tinged briefing to

American Jewish leaders to determine whether she was simply trying to get them to put pressure on Netanyahu and his government or whether she was expressing frustration and disappointment without holding any political grudges.

American-Israeli relations are not on the verge of collapse at this stage of the negotiating process. However, there seemed to be a bit more empathy for the Palestinian than the Israeli side in Albright's monologue.

"What is happening is that the Palestinians have lost hope," she said. "They feel that whatever they do it's not enough."

But she made sure to throw in the palliative: "We are doing everything to protect Israel's security." And if she means it, and she, probably does, what else is new?

Security forces brace for violence as Israeli Arabs mark Land Day

By DAVID RUDGE,
 MARGOT DUKKEVITCH,
 and MOHAMMED NAJIB

Police and the IDF are on high alert today on both sides of the Green Line, as Israeli Arabs plan a series of strikes, marches, and demonstrations marking the deadly clash in 1976 between Galilee Arabs and the IDF.

Six Israeli Arabs died in the rioting which erupted 22 years ago following the first Rabin government's confiscations of land previously owned by Arab villages in the Galilee. Known since then as Land Day, that event's anniversary is marked annually by protests.

Rallies and marches are expected in Arraba and Kafr Kaza in the Lower Galilee and in Wadi Na'am in the Negev. Israeli Arab leaders have urged protesters not to break the law.

Abed Lubitawi, spokesman for the Arab

leadership's monitoring committee, said that a general strike would shut down schools, offices, shops, and local governments for the day. He said the action was to protest government policies toward the Arab community.

In particular, Arab leaders are angry about plans to transfer land, particularly in the Negev, to the Jewish Agency, to prevent it from being purchased by Arabs.

The tensions of the day could be exacerbated by disappointment over a deadlock in peace negotiations with the Palestinians, in addition to Arab complaints of ongoing discrimination.

Lubitawi expressed concern about the reports of massive police preparations for Land Day.

"We know how to hold our demonstrations and protests in a democratic and legal way, so we don't understand the reports of these special preparations by the police," he said. "We have called on

the public to avoid any friction and in the same tone we are urging the police to refrain from causing any provocation."

"There are no special preparations in comparison to previous years," northern region police chief Cmdr. Alik Ron said last night. "As on Land Day in the past, there will be more police on duty than on a normal day."

"Land Day over the past few years has passed quietly, and I hope it will be the same this time," Ron continued. "If there are no disturbances and law and order are maintained, there will be no need for police to intervene."

"From our point of view, every effort will be made to enable those who want to express themselves through licensed parades or rallies to do so, as long as there are no breaches. Anyone, however, who tries to take advantage of the day to create disturbances by blocking roads or trying to disrupt traffic by other means will find

the police ready."

The IDF is reinforcing its presence in the territories, where Palestinian leaders have called for a commercial shutdown beginning at noon.

Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat called Land Day a historical event and told reporters that "the Palestinians throughout the world will never forget their homeland."

The PA called on Palestinians to participate in Land Day rallies in Jenin, Hebron, Ramallah, and Kalkiya.

A leaflet published by the National and Islamic Committee in Gaza called on Palestinians to oppose settlements and to protect their land by marking Land Day.

Some violence was reported last night near Nablus, where, according to Palestinian sources, the IDF imposed a curfew on the Asker al-Jadeed refugee camp, after Palestinians stoned a patrol.

Dozens of Palestinians, joined by

Palestinian officials, marched in Gaza yesterday, calling for an end to Jewish settlement activity.

In Rafiah, Palestinians clashed with troops after they attempted to plant olive trees near the Egyptian-Palestinian border. There were no reported injuries.

Arieh O'Sullivan adds: Security sources said that troops had been briefed on avoiding friction and interfering with demonstrations. But they added that a firm hand would be taken if Arabs moved to threaten Israeli civilians or soldiers.

"We expect the day to pass without mishap. But it is up to the Palestinians," an IDF official said. "We have insisted to the Palestinians that their security forces prevent any outbreaks of violence."

Jay Bushinsky adds: Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani briefed the cabinet on the measures being taken to assure the maintenance of law and order on Land Day.



NEWS

in brief

Body found east of Ofra

The body of a 50-year-old man, apparently from east Jerusalem, was discovered late last night near the settlement of Rimoni, located between Jericho and Ramallah, about a 20-minute car ride from Ofra. Judea and Samaria Police Spokesman Opher Sivan said police and security forces were at the site and an investigation was under way.

Margot Dukkevitch

PM convinces Rita to sing 'Hatikva' for jubilee

Songstress Rita yesterday agreed to sing "Hatikva" at Pa'amonei Yovel, the central event of the 50th anniversary celebrations, after speaking on the phone with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

He called to ask her to reconsider her earlier decision not to do so. "I didn't expect the involvement, attention, and such a warm personal appeal from the prime minister," she said. "It is impossible to turn down an appeal like that." She said that she and her team would donate their fee to the Olanit Hospital for children with cancer in Petah Tikva.

Itim

First visit by Syrian minister to Iraq in 18 years

Syria's health minister arrived in Baghdad yesterday, the first visit by a Syrian cabinet minister to Iraq since the two countries broke ties in 1980. Iyad Shatti, arrived on a three-day visit with 12 truckloads of food and medical supplies as a gift from Syrian people, the official Iraqi News Agency said. The visit is the latest sign of warming ties since trade delegations of the two countries exchanged visits in May 1997. There still are no diplomatic relations.

AP

Jerusalem synagogue defaced with excrement

The Yehoshafat Hashleima Synagogue in Jerusalem's Armon Hanatziv neighborhood was broken into some time last week, with the intruders smearing excrement all over the walls and floor. Nothing was stolen, however. The synagogue, used only on Shabbat, is located in the shelter of a local school. When one of the congregants, Ya'acov Sari, arrived Friday afternoon to set it up for prayers, he was greeted by the horrific sight. Though the holy ark was open, nothing was missing.

"I have never in my life seen a case of vandalism like this," Sari said. Police are investigating. The members of the Yemenite congregation prayed elsewhere on Shabbat.

Itim

Treasury, Histadrut launch pay talks

The Histadrut must realize that the drop in inflation means there is a significant change in the background to the public sector pay talks, which began yesterday, according to Treasury representative Yossi Kucik. While the Histadrut is calling for a two-percent real-term pay increase, the government is calling on workers to accept a real-term pay freeze until the end of next year. This, claims the Treasury, is for the greater good of the entire economy and will help prevent a cycle of higher inflation and increased unemployment, particularly in low-tech, labor-intensive industries.

The two sides agreed to set up a working committee, which will discuss the issues at stake in the coming weeks.

David Harris

High Court to hear torture case today

The High Court of Justice is due to hear an urgent petition from the Public Committee against Torture in Israel this morning. The committee petitioned the court alleging that the General Security Service had used physical force against Ahmed Bilal, who is being held in Jerusalem's Russian Compound lock-up. As a result, Bilal had been hospitalized, the petition says, but this was hidden from the court by the GSS. The petition calls on the court to order the attorney-general to investigate.

Batsheva Tsor

Uruguayan president arrives

Uruguay's President Julio Maria Sanguinetti arrived yesterday for a four-day visit. A formal reception is planned for today at Beit Hanassi followed by a visit to Yad Vashem. Sanguinetti is also expected to sign some economic cooperation agreements in a meeting with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Itim

Meretz-Gesher launch election campaign

The joint Meretz-Gesher list decided held its first meeting yesterday at Meretz headquarters in Tel Aviv to kick off its campaign for the Knesset elections in June. Hanan Erez, secretary-general of Meretz, and Yitzhak Eshel, a former Labor Party member who is close to Maxim Levy, Gesher's candidate for Histadrut chairman, were chosen to head the campaign headquarters. Yairiv Ben-Eliezer was put in charge of public relations.

Meanwhile, Histadrut Chairman Amir Peretz's reelection campaign was launched yesterday as well. Posters of him were tacked up at key intersections, with the slogan: Power to the workers.

Itim

Following Arafat-Kahalani meeting

Israel, PA to jointly fight car theft

By LIAT COLLINS,
MARGOT DUKKEVITCH,
and MOHAMMED HAJIB

In a meeting with Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani in Gaza yesterday, Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat quipped that at a time when the peace process is stuck, the greatest cooperation is found among Jewish and Arab car thieves.

At the end of the meeting, the two announced they would establish a joint committee to try to combat car theft. They also announced a joint committee would study the day-to-day problems at crossing points. Kahalani, in similar mood, joked that this issue at least did not require the efforts of US mediators.

Kahalani and Arafat held a private meeting before one attended by MKs Yehuda Harel and Emanuel Zissmann, of Kahalani's Third Way party, Arafat's adviser Dr. Ahmed Tibi, and Preventive Security head in Gaza Col. Mohammed Dahlan.

Kahalani said the message he brought was of his party's commitment to the peace process. "We will do everything to ensure the process continues. We recognize the fact that the two peoples - the Palestinian and the Jewish peoples have to live, together, between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River. We must find the formula [for this]," Kahalani said.

Arafat told him he is studying the US proposals and expects the Israeli government to act to further the process. He praised the idea raised in the US of a meeting of world leaders to promote the process.

Palestinians sources called the meeting a success and said Arafat also raised the issue of the release



Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani (left) with Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat at their meeting in Gaza yesterday.

of Palestinian prisoners. Following the meeting the two held a joint press conference.

Meanwhile in East Jerusalem, Palestinian Legislative Council member Haider Abdel Khader suggested setting up a Palestinian civil guard in east Jerusalem, charging

that the Israel Police is not doing enough to safeguard Palestinians there. He said the guard would patrol the streets and maintain order and public safety, as well as fight robbery and drug trafficking.

In an interview on Army Radio, Khader said the guard would operate

openly and not as the Preventive Security apparatus.

"We have drug and welfare problems in the city that are not being dealt with by the Israeli police," he said, adding that local residents are reluctant to contact Israeli police who tend to give pri-

ority to crimes in Jewish neighborhoods.

In response, Kahalani said the police treat the residents of east Jerusalem properly and added that more police stations are being opened in the capital's Arab neighborhoods.

NRP: If we don't retain 65% of West Bank, we topple government

By SARAH HONIG
and LIAT COLLINS

The National Religious Party warned Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu last night that it would consider quitting the government unless Israel keeps control over 65 percent of the West Bank and Gaza Strip after a final settlement.

The party's executive bureau formulated a list of demands last night for Netanyahu's talks with US envoy Dennis Ross.

Topping the list was a call to pull back from no more than 35% of the territories as part of a final-status agreement.

Another called for "strict, no nonsense reciprocity in honoring Oslo commitments" as a "prerequisite for any further pullbacks."

MK Hanan Porat accused Netanyahu of "pulling the wool over the nation's eyes. Under no circumstances will we be a party to this deception or to a government which deceives the people who voted for it."

Porat asserted that "when one

examines exactly what the Americans are talking about and how much of Area B and how much of Area C are involved, it quickly becomes crystal clear that we are not discussing a 13% withdrawal but a pullback from a full 25% of what we now control. We cannot cooperate with such fraud."

"Should Netanyahu give in to what are called 'more moderate' forces in his coalition, then there will be no reason for us to stay in the government any more," Transport Minister Shaul Yahalom said.

Porat called for demanding more Palestinian action against terrorism, the extradition of murder suspects, a reduction of the Palestinian police force, and that the Palestinian Charter be amended.

Ten right-wing MKs from the Land of Israel Front have threatened to support the opposition in any no-confidence motion if plans for a major redeployment go ahead. They include: Moledet's

Benny Elon and Rehavam Ze'evi; Zvi Hendel, Hanan Porat and Nissim Slomiansky from the NRP; Moshe Peled and Haim Dayan (both Tsomet); Michael Kleiner (Gesher); Ze'ev (Benny) Begin and David Re'em (both Likud).

Begin told Israel Radio yesterday that the prime minister has "brought the public debate and situation down to a matter of real estate deals." He said that the US proposal means in essence "territories for communities."

"This is not a sale. This is a give-away. Territories for nothing. Nothing at all, *gur nicht*," said Begin. "A person prepared to accept such a plan shows himself to be an irresponsible wimp and I think that such a government which cannot stand up to pressures shows itself to have no right of existence."

Coalition and Likud whip Meir Sheerit said he was not worried about the threats and noted that several of the MKs have often voted against the premier.

MK Bronfman pushes for unity government

By SARAH HONIG

Yisrael Ba'aliya MK Roman Bronfman announced yesterday that he will this week begin a round of talks with "the moderate forces" within both coalition and opposition to facilitate the creation of a national unity government.

Bronfman, who announced such initiatives in the past, argued yesterday that "in view of the fact that the US secretary of state cautions that the peace process is dying, a national unity government has become more of a necessity than ever."

He reasoned that "with such hawkish forces as the National Religious Party in his coalition, as well as some Likud elements, it is near impossible for [Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu to continue the peace process. They will foil every and any concession."

"Yisrael Ba'aliya is unanimous in its support for national unity," Bronfman said.

However, political observers note that Bronfman had always been on the leftist margins of his party and that its two ministers, Nathan Sharansky and Yuli Edelstein, have been among the most outspoken opponents of agreeing to the current American

proposals. Yisrael Ba'aliya MK Yuli Stern is among the most hawkish in the Knesset.

But Bronfman says he has his party's sanction to proceed against attempts by the right wing to scrap the peace process.

He is sure his move could win friends in The Third Way, Gesher, United Torah Judaism, and Shas, he said. These forces, he said, could enlist the more rightist elements in Labor.

Bronfman claimed seven ministers support his move, but he did not name them.

He argued that a national unity government "could also help, with an agreement with Lebanon and Syria. At a time of such crucial decisions, we need as broad a national consensus as possible."

Labor Party chairman Ehud Barak, according to Bronfman, had at one point been receptive to the national unity notion, but Bronfman admitted that he does not know if Barak still feels this way.

Labor MK Dalia Itzik reacted last night by saying that "Labor has no desire to join a Netanyahu-led government. Our aim is to bring him down as soon as possible and go immediately to new elections - the sooner, the better."

Our sincerest condolences to
Tzemach Richter
on the passing of his

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We offer deepest condolences to our
friend and colleague

Yossi Belalti

on the sudden passing of his

Brother

Management and Staff
The Jerusalem Post

Suha Arafat snubs BGU, Soroka experts

By JUDY SIEGEL
and Jerusalem Post Staff

Experts from Beersheba's Ben-Gurion University and Soroka Hospital went to Gaza yesterday to present Palestinian Authority officials with a proposal for unique health cooperation project.

The group was scheduled to meet with Suha Arafat, but once there was met by a secretary who said the PA chairman's wife would be unable to hold the meeting.

The four-point program suggests the establishment of special outpatient clinics at the Karni checkpoint leading to Gaza as an extension of Soroka's outpatient clinics.

In addition, a post-graduate training center for health care professionals could be established as an extension of BGU's faculty of health sciences.

BGU also proposed offering specialty training to Palestinian medical professionals at Soroka and in research departments of BGU's faculty of health sciences. The

training could be either short-term, or as part of an MA or PhD program, according to BGU President Avishay Braverman.

In addition, a research program in the field of health and health services could be initiated as part of the World Health Organization's global initiative for "Health and Development in Border Areas."

The PA officials, led by security services head Gen. Nasser Yusuf, were very enthusiastic about the project, which to succeed needs funding from the Health Ministry and the US government.

Braverman said that the proposal and the PA's warm reaction was a "breakthrough" at a time when political negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians have broken down.

BGU, Soroka and the Palestinians have cooperated informally in the past, even during the height of the intifada, but the formal project would advance this to a much higher level, according to the university.

PULLOUT

Continued from Page 1

Palestinian officials said the summit would ensure the implementation of withdrawal.

Arafat said he saw no reason to meet with Netanyahu unless such a meeting would produce results.

"I am ready to attend any meeting that will lead to results and I welcome any American initiative to hold a summit meeting in Washington attended by a number of world leaders," Arafat said.

On Friday, in a telephone briefing with American Jewish leaders, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright painted a gloomy picture of the condition of the Middle East peace process.

"We're faced with a real crisis of confidence - not only between Israel and the Palestinians, but in the wider region," she said, according to a transcript of the conversation obtained by The Jerusalem Post.

"Time is running out. There are only 13 months until Oslo runs out. Then a vacuum would ensue

that could be filled with violence and extremism."

"The US has tried for seven months to mediate events to promote the four-point agenda. We've tried private efforts. There has been no progress."

After declaring that the US does not intend to exert pressure on any party, Albright said: "I have to tell you in all honesty we are coming to the end of the road. We are very concerned about the deterioration. One of our options is to let the parties deal with the problems alone, to walk away."

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Weizman to PM:

You too can make history

By BAT SHEVA TSUR

President Ezer Weizman yesterday called on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to make "the right decisions" and change history.

Speaking at a state ceremony in honor of deceased presidents and prime ministers, Weizman responded to a question posed by Netanyahu who had said: "Does history make leaders or is it the leaders who determine history?" Netanyahu said it is difficult to resolve the issue.

The prime minister, who arrived directly from his talks with US envoy Dennis Ross, also said that "despite the difficulties and crises in the short run, we can and should see the signs that herald peace with our neighbors."

When it was his turn to address the audience of former presidents (Ephraim Katsir, Yitzhak Navon) and prime ministers (Yitzhak Shamir) and the families and associates of the deceased, Weizman gave Netanyahu a clear message. "I do believe, Mr. Prime Minister, it is the leaders who determine history. We can hear the fluttering of history's wings in the air right now."

Weizman pointed to three former prime ministers who, he said, had bravely gone against their basic concepts to change history. David Ben-Gurion, he said, declared the state in the face of a tremendous public debate about the timing.

Menachem Begin, who had very strong ideas, nevertheless met an enemy and eventually fixed Israel's borders with Egypt and accepted the Camp David Accords which called for Palestinian autonomy.



President Ezer Weizman addresses yesterday's ceremony honoring deceased presidents and prime ministers. (Brian Henkel)

Yitzhak Rabin was loathe to shake the hand of Yasser Arafat - yet did. "These are the actions that history forces leaders to take. I hope, and wish, that you, Mr. Prime Minister - at this time, when the

fluttering of history's wings is somewhat loudly heard in the air - will know how to make the correct

decisions."

Hizbullah: No security guarantees for Israel

Hizbullah said yesterday that nobody, including the Lebanese government, would dare give Israel any security guarantees if the IDF pulled out of south Lebanon.

"We have no doubt that no one would dare to give security guarantees or touch the holy weapons of the resistance that repeatedly defeated the Zionist enemy," Hussein Khalil, political assistant to Hizbullah leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, said in a statement.

He did not elaborate. Israel recently said it would accept UN Resolution 425 demanding its withdrawal from the security zone if the Lebanese government agreed to deploy troops in the area to prevent cross-border terror attacks. Khalil's comments marked the first clear statement by Hizbullah on an Israeli withdrawal since the 425 initiative was raised.

Asked to elaborate on the statement, Hizbullah spokesman Nayef Kreyim said: "Our position is clear. The occupation does not deserve security guarantees. A price must be paid for occupation."

"Israel does not have the right to touch Hizbullah's weapons if it pulls out. This is a matter of Lebanese sovereignty," he told Reuters.

Lebanese Foreign Minister Fares Bouez told Egyptian

Television yesterday that the Israeli government, as part of its 425 initiative, is trying to force Beirut to incorporate the South Lebanese Army into the regular Lebanese Army.

He added that the initiative, as promoted by Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, sets many conditions that would impinge on Lebanese sovereignty, should Lebanon agree to them.

"Israel is trying to force us to absorb the SLA into the Lebanese Army, so that later it might be able to demand that those units be sent to the south, since it doesn't trust the Lebanese Army, only those units," Bouez said.

"This is something we unequivocally reject," he added. "Israel is trying to distort Resolution 425 and empty it of meaning."

[Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu is trying to drag us into negotiations.

"If we recognize the principle of negotiations here, we are indirectly admitting that 425 is subject to any kind of negotiations, which would lead to a voiding of the operative nature of the resolution."

Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi and Syrian President Hafez Assad, who met in Damascus, believe that Israel's initiative is a plot against all the nations of the region, sources in Damascus

said. Kharrazi was quoted as saying that Assad believes that the initiative is an attempt to assert Israeli hegemony over the entire region and deal a death blow to progressive nations like Syria and Iran.

Kharrazi, who also met with Syrian Vice-President Abdel-Halim Khaddam, stressed the importance of continued resistance in southern Lebanon, and said that the Israeli initiative is really an attempt to change the geopolitical balance in the region and drive a wedge between Lebanon and those nations friendly to it.

He said that Iran also stressed during the talks the importance of cooperation between Syria and Lebanon - a reference to the linkage between the Syrian and Lebanese tracks in the peace process.

In addition, Kharrazi said that his talks with Khaddam covered the increasing Israeli-Turkish military cooperation, which has been condemned by both Tehran and Damascus as being directed against countries of the region.

Kharrazi met on Saturday with Hizbullah's Khalil, and discussed the Lebanese situation. Kharrazi is scheduled to visit Lebanon today to discuss "the conspiracies plotted by the Zionist entity against the region."

(News agencies)

Hanegbi: No pardons for murderers, domestic abusers or drug dealers

By BAT SHEVA TSUR

Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegbi said yesterday he is opposed to the granting of pardons to people who had murdered in cold blood, those who had abused women or children, and drug dealers.

"Freeing such people before their time is up would be an extremely negative message to the public, especially in view of the unprecedented increase in crime and the weakening of the ability to

enforce the law," Hanegbi said in an interview with Israel Radio. "As the president pointed out, every prisoner is free to request an early release or a pardon."

However, as justice minister, he said, he would not recommend that certain categories of criminals be included in the presidential pardons. The president decides on the granting of pardons at the recommendation of the minister.

Hanegbi was speaking shortly before an informal meeting with

former state attorney Yona Blatman, who will head the committee of experts set up to establish guidelines for the granting of presidential pardons. Also present at the meeting were Attorney-General Elyakim Rubinstein and the State Attorney Edna Arbel.

The committee is due to present its recommendations to President Ezer Weizman within a month, and the president is expected to grant pardons during the entire jubilee year.

Labor's 'New Social Alliance' to take on Shas

By SARAH HONIG

The Labor Party is going to take on Shas and wrest the Sephardi vote from it, chairman Ehud Barak announced yesterday. Implied in the message was a challenge to the Likud power base as well. All this Barak unabashedly admitted, will be done by taking a leaf out of Shas's book.

Barak and MK Shlomo Ben-Ami launched what they called "the New Social Alliance." The venue they chose was Kibbutz Shefayim, where dozens of Labor politicians and functionaries put in an appearance, as well as a small

number of participants labeled as "neighborhood activists."

Barak explained that his party is appalled "by how Shas has managed to station itself at the national financial faucets. It sponsors all sorts of social action projects which win it votes, but it gets reimbursed from the public coffers."

"We plan to launch our own social action projects, like computer classes or public defender services to help the individual pitted against a merciless state bureaucracy. We figure that at least some of these activities will entitle us to public funds and I will be happy if they brings state



MK Shlomo Ben-Ami

resources our way." Barak denied that his real aim is

to win blue-collar voters away from the Likud. "I don't care how people will vote. Perhaps eventually more political awareness, tolerance, and openness to Labor's message will translate into votes, but that is not our primary aim. Our objectives are altruistic and pure."

Shas MK Yitzhak Cohen was derisive. "I'm glad Labor has decided to follow in our footsteps. Perhaps in time, they'll go the whole way and join Shas. In the meantime, I trust in the good sense of the citizen. They'll be able to easily distinguish between the authentic and the imitation and I think they'll be wary of cheap copies."

PALESTINIAN PRESS REVIEW

By MICHAEL SELA

Hope against hope

In the debate over the Israeli redeployment in the West Bank, the Palestinians have been swinging recently between hoping against hope that the Americans may force Israel to abide by its commitment to redeploy in three stages, and believing that such American pressure is impossible, given the current American-Israeli relationship.

The issue at stake is not the 4 percent difference between the American and the Israeli suggestions, *Al-Quds* says in an editorial, the day before US envoy Dennis Ross arrived in the region.

Rather, it is the 25 percent difference between the Israeli and the Palestinian position.

The Americans have not come close to any middle-way initiative, claims *Al-Quds*.

Nevertheless, the Palestinians accept the American efforts, especially since the entire international community has come to understand that Israel is responsible for the stalemate in the peace process.

After Arafat's first meeting with Ross, *Al-Quds* wrote "While there are no positive indicators that give reason for optimism... while Washington faces its most difficult challenge to its credibility... it is urgent that all the Arabs stand seriously in face of the political comedy and the vicious circle of deliberately delaying the agreements."

Al-Quds also alludes to the Palestinian Authority's recent call for an Arab summit conference as a means of pressuring the USA.

Take and demand

Ali Jirbawi in *Al-Ayyam* sarcastically criticizes a prevailing Palestinian "arrogant stand," of people who believe that it is possible to force the stronger party in a dispute to give away its interests.

But those who believe this seem to forget that there is no free lunch; that each taking needs some giving, and any disruption of the balance of power often ends

with more gains to the stronger party.

Referring to the American diplomatic initiative, Jirbawi says that, until now, all the initiatives have been no more than declarations, because the US does not want to involve itself in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Jirbawi criticizes the Palestinians who are willing to accept the 13% American redeployment proposal as a Palestinian achievement.

"These Palestinians do not want to admit that the American initiative is much less than half the latest Palestinian suggestion, and it includes humiliating demands," he writes. Jirbawi refers to Israel's demand that the Palestinians stop anti-Israel incitement.

"What is the definition of this incitement? Let the Americans read the Israeli press, especially the right-wing press, and they will understand the meaning of incitement against the Palestinians. Does reciprocity mean only that the Palestinians abide by the Israeli demands?"

Jirbawi is not happy with the American position. "Let's not be happy... because they are imposing Israeli position on us, wrapped in shiny American wrapping paper."

Peace campaign

In an interesting rejection of the Arab cultural boycott of Israel, Hassan Batal, writing in *Al-Ayyam* calls on Palestinian jour-

nalists to accept the invitation of the Israeli Center for Peace in the Middle East to an Israeli-Arab journalists' conference in Athens on April 2.

Interestingly, Batal, who worked for many years for the Palestinian media in Iraq and Cyprus, knows few Israeli journalists and was not even invited to the conference.

"I do not care for a blacklist. I care that a Palestinian union threatens to give me a national punishment, instead of protecting my... journalistic right to work for the peace campaign together with my Israeli colleagues who support a Palestinian-Israeli peace."

In joining the Arab Writers Federation in its campaign against any normalization with Israel, the Palestinian Journalists' Union behaves "like a pen-pal for the Arab union, which is a creation of an Arab regime," writes Batal, advocating the Palestinian "strategic choice" of a peace offensive.

'Tekuma'

The debate over the TV series *Tekuma* has penetrated the Palestinian living room.

Ashraf Ajrami, in *Al-Ayyam* describes the dispute in Israel, especially around the upcoming episode "Biladi, Biladi" ("My Country").

But this documentary is far from getting to the essence of truth, says Ajrami.

"As long as the Israelis do not admit that Zionism is a colonialist idea, which gave rights to those who do not deserve it, and created by force things which are against justice, they can not speak about finding the truth," he writes.

According to Ajrami, the Israeli rejection of a Palestinian participation in a historical documentary stems from the Israeli mentality, which can not accept the idea of equality and coexistence on the basis of two states for two peoples.

Women's rights

Bassam Jarar, one of the leaders of the Palestinian Islamic movement, explains in *Al-Ayyam* why he is angry about a controversial book, *Law and the Future of the Palestinian Woman*.

Quoting various paragraphs from the book, he claims that some of the proposed laws are against the Shari'a, Islamic religious law. Others do not deal just with men and women.

Referring to this book and other publications which deal with women's rights, Jarar is totally convinced that "many of the suggestions could create fissures in Palestinian society if they'd be implemented, and cause evil consequences to woman, man and child."

"The problem is not at all women's rights, it is a cultural conflict," he concludes.

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ISRAEL DISCOUNT BANK

Jordan bans 56 Israeli books

By JAY BUSHINSKY

A ban on the distribution of 56 Israeli books in Jordan because they allegedly "degrade God and the Prophet Mohammed," has generated controversy in Amman's literary circles.

It was imposed by the Jordanian Press and Publications Department by its director, Bilal Tal, who told *The Jordan Times* yesterday as saying "I emphasize we are implementing the law, which is clear, and according to it we cannot allow the entry of books that degrade God

and the Prophet Mohammed." But the owner of the Khalili Publishing House, which imported the books, reportedly said the books were brought in under a Jordanian-Israeli agreement to promote cultural exchanges between the two countries.

"The ban does not make any sense," he said in an interview carried by *The Times*. "It is not logical that all 56 books contain passages humiliating to Islam. Why don't they just remove the parts that they don't like, as they always do?"

Khalili charged that the whole case is politically motivated and has nothing to do with the law.

Jordan's *Al Bilad* weekly reported that some domestic political parties expressed relief that the ban was instituted on the grounds that it will "protect young people's minds from dangerous ideas that might be found in such books."

Tal said the law does not discriminate between local Arab and foreign media and that "all are treated equally when it comes to what they are not allowed to do."

In a parallel development, eight Jordanian mayors canceled a

scheduled visit to Kiryat Tivon yesterday because of what they termed "heavy pressure."

The delegation was to have spent five days here.

An firm news agency report said the visit was meant to increase cooperation between the heads of Jordanian local authorities and Israel.

Kiryat Tivon Mayor Shmuel Abuay, who initiated the trip, had done so in response to the Jordanians' interest in studying Israeli health services, education and recycling techniques.

Kiryat Tivon Mayor Shmuel Abuay, who initiated the trip, had done so in response to the Jordanians' interest in studying Israeli health services, education and recycling techniques.

Agency: 50,000 olim expected in '98

By ELI WOHLGELER

The dramatic upheaval in Russia, with President Boris Yeltsin having fired his cabinet last week, will probably not have any effect on aliyah from the former Soviet Union, according to an update given by the Jewish Agency yesterday.

Immigration could increase if the economy in the peripheral areas deteriorates further, but the

current projection for 1998 is around 50,000.

Carl Ungar, director of the Aliya Department's former Soviet Union Desk, said that what helps determine the number of immigrants is the economic situation there coupled with opportunities provided by Israel.

Ungar said that on two previous occasions where Yeltsin reshuffled his cabinet, there was no change in immigration figures.

It was suggested at a meeting of four agency officials who handle immigration, that they try to encourage a growing number of unemployed teachers, doctors, and engineers in the peripheral towns of former Soviet states to make aliyah.

Alla Levy, head of Moscow mission of the agency in charge of Russia, Byelorussia, and the Baltics, warned that aliyah figures would not grow without encouragement from Israel. She said that

even this year's projected figure of 50,000 may not be reached.

Meanwhile, Absorption Minister Yuli Edelstein told the cabinet yesterday that efforts to bring the Falash Mura from Ethiopia would be completed in three to four months, and the camp in Addis Ababa would be closed. He said

trailer camps had already been filled, and next week Falash Mura would be housed in the settlements of Ofra, Kichumim, and Efrat.



Arafat envoy in Jordan

Jordanian Foreign Minister Jawad Anani (right) and Faysal Tarawneh, chief of the royal court (left), meet yesterday with Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat, who came to discuss efforts to revive the peace process. (AP)

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WHERE TO RENT A CAR

Labor-affiliated school principal defies party decision

Huldai to run for Tel Aviv mayor

By MICHAEL YUDELMAN

Ron Huldai, principal of the Herzliya Gymnasium, announced yesterday he would run for mayor of Tel Aviv on an independent list, following the Labor Party's decision not to field its own candidate against incumbent mayor Ronni Milo.

Labor leaders decided a few weeks ago to forge a joint list with Milo for November's municipal elections on the tacit understanding he would not run against Labor leader Ehud Barak for prime minister. However, Milo has since asked the Likud and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for their endorsement behind his candidacy, infuriating

Labor, whose leaders are hinting that they may contest Milo after all.

The Likud is also considering backing a candidate against Milo, who has consistently criticized Likud policy. Netanyahu has been holding a series of meetings with potential mayoral candidates, including Brig. Gen. (res.) Yoram Yair, who has agreed to run for mayor but only with the support of both major parties.

In an interview with a Tel Aviv weekly, Yair said "I won't become a party member to run for mayor. If both the Likud and Labor support me, I'll consider running."

Netanyahu is also considering



Ron Huldai

supporting an independent candidate, like Huldai. Huldai, whose appeal against

Labor's decision was rejected last Thursday, yesterday attacked Barak for failing to nominate him for the Tel Aviv post, or MK Uzi Baram for mayoral candidate in Jerusalem.

"A party which doesn't fight for its place in the municipal elections, won't have the troops on the ground to bring votes come Knesset elections," Huldai said. "I'm going to beat Milo."

Huldai added, citing surveys indicating 80% of Tel Avivians do not believe that Milo has done anything good for the city.

"Tel Aviv is running by itself, without a mayor, hence the horrendous health, transport and environmental problems it endures," said Huldai.

He promised his list would consist of 50% women and include representatives from slums and Jaffa. "It's time to give Tel Aviv back to its rightful owners, its residents," Huldai said.

Huldai apparently changed his position vis-a-vis homosexuals, whom he had compared to cockroaches in an interview to the *Ha'ir* weekly. Yesterday he said "some of my workers are gay," adding "I'm a very open guy. It doesn't matter to me what a person's sexual tendencies are."

Meanwhile, Dor Shalom has not ruled out joining Huldai's list, spokesman Oren Yehi-Shalom said yesterday, after Huldai praised the movement, calling its members "authentic Israelis."

NEWS

in brief

Hoter-Yishai petition denied

The High Court of Justice yesterday rejected a petition by Israel Bar Association head Dror Hoter-Yishai, who had asked the High Court to force the Tel Aviv District Court to hear an appeal of his conviction yesterday.

The appeal will thus be heard in mid-May.

Last month, Hoter-Yishai was convicted by the Tel Aviv Magistrate's Court of tax evasion, given a six-month suspended sentence and fined NIS 50,000. He appealed to the district court and the appeal was originally scheduled for yesterday. However, prosecutors asked for a two-month delay, which the court granted.

Hoter-Yishai claimed that the delay would cause him serious damage, but the justices said there was no reason for them to intervene. *Itim*

Woman who demanded alimony freed from jail

A Supreme Court justice has ordered the release of a 62-year-old woman who was jailed for refusing to accept her husband's terms for a divorce, a court spokesman said. Rabbinical Judge David Ohayon had ordered the woman jailed for two weeks on Thursday after she refused to sign a divorce agreement and insisted on receiving a pension and alimony. *AP*

Counselors to handle religious domestic violence

The Education Ministry has trained several dozen counselors who will offer guidance and counseling services to religious families suffering from domestic violence, the ministry announced yesterday.

The program was initiated by the ministry's Adult Education Department, which operates similar programs for other sectors. This new program aims to address the issue while considering the special needs of the religious sector. *Jerusalem Post Staff*

Yishai to visit Pollard

Labor and Social Affairs Minister Eli Yishai will visit convicted spy Jonathan Pollard in his US prison tomorrow. The visit was moved up at Pollard's request as he wanted it before Pessah. Yishai will give Pollard a letter from Shas member Rabbi Ovadia Yosef expressing the hope that he will be released this month, Nissan, the month of freedom. *Jerusalem Post Staff*

Swiss party scolds Holocaust-fund financing

Switzerland will not allow itself to be "blackmailed," Franz Steinegger, president of the pro-business Radical Democrats, one of four parties in the governing coalition, said over the weekend, ruling out the use of public funds or central bank reserves as compensation for Holocaust victims. The three major Swiss banks agreed Thursday in New York to negotiate a "global resolution" with claimants and the World Jewish Congress over Holocaust-era assets in the banks. *Marilyn Henry*

Judge: No need to update Maccabiah bridge indictment

By GALT LIPKIS BECK

There is no need to specify the cause of the Maccabiah bridge collapse in the indictment Tel Aviv Magistrate's Court Judge Edna Beckenstein ruled yesterday, rejecting the five defendants' request for further detail.

She said the indictment against the five men charged in the bridge collapse nine months ago includes all the necessary details on the cause.

The collapse killed four Australian athletes and injured more than 60.

Micha Bar-Ilan, the engineer who designed the bridge, pleaded innocent yesterday.

The other four defendants — Yehoshua Ben-Ezra and Baruch Kargula, the owners of the contracting company that built the bridge; Adam Misburi, manager of

the subcontractor Irgunit; and Yoram Eyal, the chairman of the games organizing committee, who has since resigned — had pleaded not guilty at the start of the month.

The five are charged with causing death by negligence and building without proper permits. Ben-Ezra, Kargula, and Misburi are also charged with violating the Contractors Registration Law. The bridge was built especially for the Maccabiah games.

The footbridge collapsed under the Australian delegation as it crossed on its way into the National Stadium for the games' opening ceremony on July 14. The Australian athletes fell into the polluted waters of the Yarkon River.

The next court session is scheduled for May 18, when the actual trial will commence.

Giuliani: NYC mulling Crown Heights apology

MARILYN HENRY

NEW YORK — Nearly seven years after the Crown Heights riots left Yankel Rosenbaum dead, Rudolph Giuliani, the current mayor of New York, is prepared to apologize for the city's handling of the violence.

That would help settle a federal lawsuit, but it could also reopen the Jewish-black schism in the city. The former mayor, David Dinkins, has accused Giuliani of pandering to the haredic community, saying Giuliani's apology would send "a message that anyone with enough political clout can profit at the city's expense."

Dinkins, the first black mayor of New York, lost his 1993 bid for reelection to Giuliani in part over the four days of rioting in the Brooklyn neighborhood in August 1991.

Giuliani, a former federal prosecutor, has repeatedly denounced Dinkins' handling of Crown Heights, saying his administration failed to move quickly at the first sign of rioting.

Rosenbaum, a haredic scholar from Australia, was fatally stabbed after being surrounded by a group of blacks in which someone screamed: "Kill the Jew!"

The scuffle over the settlement of the civil suit comes only days before Limerick Nelson is to be sentenced after his conviction on federal civil rights charges for Rosenbaum's death. Nelson previously had been acquitted of murder.

Residents of the Lubavitch enclave in Brooklyn had filed a civil suit in federal court charging the Dinkins administration violated their constitutional rights during the riots for having "permitted, facilitated and effectively condoned" attacks on Jews by rampaging groups of black youths.

Under the terms of a tentative agreement, Giuliani would apologize and the city would pay possibly several million dollars to 29 plaintiffs and Jewish institutions in Crown Heights, according to published reports.



Author Sami Michael (left), Iraqi dissident Rifa Kashi, and Prof. Sasson Somekh (right), head of the Israeli Academic Center in Cairo, yesterday in Tel Aviv during the launch of the Israeli Committee for Solidarity with the Iraqi People. (Yael Somekh/Israel Sun)

Iraq-Israel friendship forum meets in Tel Aviv

By THOMAS O'DWYER

A new Iraqi-Israeli friendship group held its first public meeting in Tel Aviv last night, and was addressed by an Iraqi opposition activist who arrived especially from London.

The dissident, Rifa Kashi, told the meeting of the Israeli Committee for Solidarity with the Iraqi People that a few attempted uprisings against President Saddam Hussein had failed.

"The regime has become more repressive, the killing of Iraqis continues all the time," he said.

Kashi said he was delighted to be in Israel to encourage the foundation of the group, which wants to highlight the distinction between the

Iraqi regime and the Iraqi people.

Kashi recalled anecdotes of former Jewish friends and neighbors he had known in Iraq, and said he is in touch with many Jewish groups in his campaigning for human rights. "There are two million Iraqis in exile and I think many Iraqis will applaud what you are doing as an example to other Iraqis."

Kashi is running a worldwide signature campaign called Charter 91 to demand a written constitution for Iraq, along with full civil and religious liberties, democracy, and the rule of law in the post-Saddam period.

The meeting was also addressed by several of the group's founding members, who are mainly

academics, intellectuals, businessmen, and public figures of Iraqi origin, including Prof. Sasson Somekh, head of the Israeli Academic Center in Cairo, Prof. Yehudah Shenhav, of Tel Aviv University, and the writer Sami Michael.

"Our next step is to convene a much bigger gathering, probably in June, with the participation of Iraqi groups from Britain and the USA," said Dr. Shaul Zadkha, who chaired the meeting.

The aim of the committee is to forge links with Iraqi opposition groups in the West, and to share the cultural experience of being Iraqi with Jews and non-Jews of Iraqi origin. It plans to document eyewitness accounts of a rich Jewish life and heritage in Iraq.

New drug for impotence soon on the market

By JUDY SIEGEL and news agencies

Promedico, the pharmaceutical importer that represents the international drug company, Pfizer, expects to start marketing the anti-impotence drug Viagra within a few months. It expects sales to be impressive.

The medication, originally developed for treating angina pectoris (chest pains) has just been approved by the US Food and Drug Administration. Speeded-up approval procedures in the Health Ministry should shorten the waiting time before it is imported and available here.

The prescription-only drug will bring about a "revolution" in the treatment of male sexual dysfunction, said Dr. Dov Podesh, chief of urology at Hadassah-University Hospital, speaking on the basis of clinical trials he has followed.

The oral pill, known generically as sildenafil citrate, is taken about an hour before intercourse. It enhances the smooth-muscle relaxant effects of nitric oxide, a chemical normally released in response to sexual stimulation which increased blood flow to certain parts of the penis, indirectly causing an erection.

The first pill for impotence ever approved by the FDA, Viagra's wholesale price in the US will be about \$7 a pill. It is expected to be available in US pharmacies in about a month, the FDA said.

Promedico has not yet set a local price, said Yael Rav-Hon, product manager for Pfizer.

"The benefit of Viagra is that it can be used almost spontaneously, without procedures that interfere

with sexual relations; in addition, it isn't taken daily, but only when needed," Podesh said.

According to studies, half of men aged 50 to 70 suffer some degree of impotence, in addition to about 10% of younger men. In the US, some 10 to 30 million men suffer from this problem, many as a result of atherosclerosis, diabetes, prostate disorders, or as a side effect of medication.

It may not be taken by people using nitroglycerin patches or under-the-tongue tablets for chest pains, as the combination could lower blood pressure. The FDA

also warned against taking Viagra with other anti-impotence drugs, as the combinations have not been studied.

Viagra can be taken only once a day in a recommended dose of 25 to 100 milligrams, depending on effectiveness and side effects.

"The drug should benefit about 50% of men suffering from impotence," said Dr. Mordechai Halperin, director of the Jerusalem Center for Impotence and Infertility. "Of these, about 10% are likely to stop using it because of the side effects," which, according to the FDA, can include dizziness,

nausea, flushed cheeks and possibly temporary color blindness.

In those cases where Viagra is not helpful, patients will have to return to conventional treatments, including penile injections and surgical implants, mechanical pumps and pellets inserted into the urethra.

The new drug is unlikely to be covered by the health funds, Podesh said, as "this is not strictly medical; it's for men's pleasure."

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See it in HEBREW... Hear it in ENGLISH

Yeltsin, MPs set to clash over premier's appointment

By MARK TREVELYAN

MOSCOW (Reuters) — The Communist Party will not back young, untested Sergei Kiriyenko to take over as Russia's prime minister, a heartbeat from the presidency of the nuclear-armed state, party leader Gennady Zyuganov said yesterday.

His comments appeared to increase the likelihood of a showdown between President Boris Yeltsin and parliament's lower house, the Duma, which is expected to debate Kiriyenko's candidacy on Friday.

Yeltsin last week named Kiriyenko, 35, to take over as prime minister from veteran Viktor Chernomyrdin. He threatened to dissolve parliament, where the Communists are the largest faction, unless it backs his choice.

Zyuganov told Interfax news agency it would be reckless to install an inexperienced politician like Kiriyenko.

"You cannot confirm just anyone in the post of second in charge of the country," he said.

"With a seriously ill president,

the situation could arise where the prime minister would have to take charge of the nuclear suitcase, and entrusting this to some inexperienced figure would be the height of irresponsibility — something that those pushing Sergei Kiriyenko forward for prime minister refuse to acknowledge."

Yeltsin has sweeping powers under the constitution to dissolve parliament if it votes three times against his candidate, or candidates, for prime minister.

That would mean early elections. But some analysts doubt whether the Communists will call Yeltsin's bluff and risk dissolution, as they may struggle to match their strong showing in the last parliamentary polls in 1995.

In past confrontations, the Communists, who hold 138 of the Duma's 450 seats, have tended to pull back from the brink rather than give Yeltsin an excuse to dissolve the chamber. Zyuganov described the president's latest threat as blackmail.

His remarks deliberately highlighted the state of Yeltsin's health, which has come into question again

in recent months as colds and viral infections have forced him to disappear from public view.

Under the constitution, the prime minister deputizes if the president is incapacitated, and takes over for three months pending new elections if the Kremlin chief dies in office.

There is a precedent — Chernomyrdin briefly took control of the nuclear button when Yeltsin, now 67, underwent multiple heart bypass surgery in November 1996.

The president turned Russian politics upside down last Monday when he sacked Chernomyrdin's entire government and asked Kiriyenko to form a new, more dynamic team to press ahead with reforms.

In an interview on Saturday night, Chernomyrdin, 59, said he plans to run in the next presidential elections in 2000 and believes he has Yeltsin's backing.

If Yeltsin did indeed urge Chernomyrdin to run, it would be the strongest sign yet that the Kremlin chief will not seek a third term for himself.

"Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin and

I discussed this, and I understood that he agreed with my position," Chernomyrdin said.

Analysts are sceptical of the dour Chernomyrdin's chances, and many interpret his sacking as a brutal Yeltsin power play to ditch an ambitious rival.

Few appear to believe the alternative explanation — that Yeltsin has freed Chernomyrdin to focus all his energy on running for president, without the burden of leading the government and conducting unpopular reforms.

Yeltsin, first elected in 1991, has blown hot and cold on whether to seek a third term. He says he has a preferred successor in mind, but has not named him.

Crucially, Chernomyrdin stopped short of claiming to be the chosen one, saying only that he "understood" he had Yeltsin's backing.

The ambiguity will persist until Yeltsin reveals who his favorite is — and Chernomyrdin admitted he does not know when that will be. Yeltsin, who likes to play off potential rivals against each other, may well decide to preserve the uncertainty as long as possible.



Japanese welcome spring

A boy takes a close look at the cherry blossoms in Tokyo's Ueno Park yesterday. Nearly 200,000 people visited the park to see the white-pink petaled cherry trees now in bloom. (AP)

Berlin mayor questions Holocaust memorial

BERLIN (Reuters) — The mayor of Berlin on Saturday urged the German government to consider whether it is necessary to erect a new memorial in the capital city to honor the six million Jews killed by the Nazis.

Eberhard Diepgen, in an article for the Berlin daily *Tagesspiegel*, said that in the more than 50 years since the end of World War II the city had built more than 45 memorials to victims of Nazi terror.

"That's why one has to ask whether Berlin needs more and more memorials to do justice to the memory of the Holocaust victims," he said.

Diepgen said he expected a new memorial to be agreed upon once "a convincing concept has been

found. But one has to ask whether contemporary art has the means to create a memorial that is sufficiently expressive."

The German government reaffirmed its intention this week to go ahead with plans for a Holocaust memorial in Berlin, despite opposition which has threatened to derail the whole project.

The monument is due to get the final go-ahead this month once the Bonn government, the city of Berlin, and a private group who initiated the 15 million mark (\$8 million) project select a winning design.

The groundbreaking ceremony is to take place on January 27, 1999 — 54 years to the day after

the liberation of Auschwitz. But if one of the parties pulls out, it could be put on hold indefinitely.

Diepgen said there are good arguments for keeping the focus on the existing memorial at the "Neue Wache" building near the Brandenburg Gate.

Built in 1817 by architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel, the Neue Wache was renovated and made Germany's central memorial site in 1993.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl favors a design for a new memorial by New York-based architect Peter Eisenman and sculptor Richard Serra. They envisage creating a graveyard-like labyrinth of 4,000 concrete pillars up to 7.5 meters tall.

OPEC meeting to OK output cut

By STEVEN SWINDELLS

VIENNA (Reuters) — OPEC oil ministers were gathering yesterday to confirm a landmark output cut with other petroleum producers and strengthen a rally in battered prices.

An emergency meeting of the producer club today is expected to approve its contribution to a reduction of around 2.3 percent in global output to relieve glutted markets.

Other major producers outside the cartel have taken the unprecedented step of agreeing to cut output in concert with OPEC, sacrificing 170,000 barrels per day (bpd) on top of OPEC's reduction of 1.25 million.

More non-OPEC cuts could be announced by Norway later this week, raising hopes for a further rally in the price of the lifeblood of industrial economies from 25-year lows in real terms earlier this year.

"Our main objective is to reduce the production level which will eventually, hopefully

push prices even higher," Kuwaiti Oil Minister Sheikh Nasser al-Sabah said in Kuwait before leaving for Vienna.

He declined to say what price level the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries wanted to see for the world's most important strategic traded item but added: "The best we can get ... So far so good."

Nigerian Oil Minister Dan Etete was the first to arrive for the meeting.

The agreement with non-OPEC powers, if it sticks, would mark an unprecedented expansion of influence for the group founded in 1960 to protect the interests of developing country producers.

Saudi Arabia, Venezuela and non-OPEC Mexico agreed in Riyadh on March 22 an accord that has drawn support from all 11 OPEC members bar Iraq plus Oman, Egypt and Yemen. Norway is expected to announce its support this week.

Benchmark Brent crude futures closed on Friday more than \$2 a barrel higher than when

the accord came to light, the equivalent of \$3.50 up from nine-year lows in nominal terms touched earlier this month.

But markets are keenly watching for signs of whether the promised reductions in output will be any more effective at supporting prices than the cartel's much-abused quota system.

"We hope it is not going to be an April Fools' Day agreement," said a senior Gulf Arab oilman.

One of the group's main priorities will be to avoid any sign of dissension over reducing volumes that could stampede jittery markets into a price slide.

The West's energy watchdog, the International Energy Agency, cautioned last week that even if the agreement held it would not reduce all of the excess supply in the market.

IEA executive director Robert Pridle recalled that OPEC has found it difficult to restrain output in the past under its ramshackle system of production allocations.

Mandela scolds Clinton over US trade bill

By BRENDAN BOYLE

JOHANNESBURG (Reuters) — US President Bill Clinton has

closed off his visit to South Africa with a plug for economic partnership and was flying on to Botswana for a taste of the African wilds.

South African President Nelson Mandela rebuffed Clinton's trade initiative for Africa, saying it would undermine his country's freedom to set its own trade policies.

Clinton, the first US president to set foot in South Africa, paid homage on Saturday to the children who led the first sustained black uprising against white rule in 1976.

In Soweto, the bleak Johannesburg ghetto to which more than three million blacks were relegated under apartheid, he laid a wreath at a memorial to 13-year-old Hector Peterson, who was killed by a police bullet on June 16, 1976.

About 700 blacks, many of them children, died in 10 months of conflict with white-led police.

"This solemn place commemorates forever the death of one young boy, a death that shocked the world into a new recognition of the vast evil of apartheid," Clinton said.

Earlier, two wedding convoys, one including a battered American limousine that could have carried a president 20 years ago, waited patiently for Clinton's vast cavalcade to pass through the rutted streets of Thokozazi, where he met young black leaders to hear first hand of their experiences.

"I want to learn more about your take on your country and your future," he told them.

Later, at the last working engagement of his three-day visit to South Africa, he told American and South African business leaders that the African Growth and Opportunity Bill before Congress would lay the foundation for a sound future relationship.

"This is not charity, it's enlightened self-interest. It's a good thing for the US and a good thing for Africa," he said.

Mandela has been sharply critical of the bill and told CNN television: "The provisions in this bill, which restrict our freedom to trade with other countries, is something we find totally unacceptable."

"We resist any attempt by any country to impose conditions on our freedom of trade," Mandela said in an interview broadcast in

part on Saturday.

Mandela, whose long years in prison during the struggle for racial justice have given him an unrivaled moral stature on the world stage, spoke bluntly during Clinton's visit on policy difference with the United States.

Defending his friendship with leaders of Cuba, Libya and Iran, he said on Friday his South African critics could "throw themselves in a pool."

Clinton has not commented on Mandela's outburst, but White House spokesman Mike McCurry told reporters the American leader was not offended by it.

"He is Nelson Mandela. He is entitled," McCurry said.

In Johannesburg, Clinton urged American investors to increase their stakes in Africa, saying the continent, which recently began to post modest economic growth, offered good business prospects.

"The average annual return on investment is over 30 percent. This is a good deal, folks," he said.

Clinton was scheduled to attend a service in Soweto's Catholic Regina Mundi church yesterday. The church was a refuge for black victims of apartheid and a focus of opposition to white rule in a country where all public dissent was banned.

He was scheduled to fly to neighboring Botswana, one of Africa's oldest democracies, for a brief meeting with retiring President Kenneth Masire and today, a day in one of the continent's finest game sanctuaries.

The last stop of his tour will be Senegal, where his program includes a visit to the island where slaves were kept before being stuffed onto ships for the terrible journey to America.

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The emotional legacy of Stalinism



By Adina Hoffman

A Russian film by director Pavel Chukhrai, *The Thief* tells the deceptively simple story of the angry love a young boy feels for the dashing con man who wins and breaks the heart of his widowed mother. For all its carefully observed Oedipal specifics, the movie also functions on the grander, symbolic level of

THE THIEF

Written and directed by Pavel Chukhrai. Hebrew title: *Haganav*, 97 minutes. Russian dialogue, Hebrew and English subtitles. Parental guidance strongly advised. With Vladimir Mashkov, Ekaterina Rednikova, Misha Philipchuk

national psychodrama. In a strong though understated way that perhaps only a Russian filmmaker would dare, *The Thief* is as much a reckoning with the emotional legacy of Stalinism as it is the tale of one child's difficult coming of age.

The picture begins just after World War II, as Sanya (Misha Philipchuk), a somber little blond, and his pretty young mother, Katya (Ekaterina Rednikova), ride a train across the Russian countryside, destination: nowhere in particular. Times are hard and as the train chugs along in the darkness, one can't help but see this crowded, transcontinental — and un-Russian — form of transport as somehow both actual (this is how people once traversed the great Soviet expanse) and mythic (the aimless locomotive and its hungry,



The young and pretty widowed mother Katya (Ekaterina Rednikova) is the subject of a thief's amorous intentions.

tired passengers are surely an emblem for that country and its beaten-down population just after the war.

So, too, when a handsome army officer, Tolyan (Vladimir Mashkov), makes an appearance in their compartment and begins to flirt shamelessly with Katya, even as an old woman a few cars back screams that she's just been robbed, we see him as very real (it's clear from the outset that he's the thief) and larger than life. Through the boy's awe-struck eyes, the soldier seems huge and all-powerful, and by the time he

shows off his Stalin tunic to the child and claims, a wicked smirk playing at his lips, that the premier is his father, the boy's image of him as a demigod is sealed. For much of the rest of the film, Sanya and Katya wander with the thief from city to city, where he steals from trusting neighbors, she pleads with him to break the habit and the boy looks on with a complicated blend of wonder, hatred, admiration and fear.

Chukhrai works throughout in a major key, as if composing a ready-made classic, or a best foreign-language film, nominee for

the Academy Awards (which this movie was) the photography is sweeping, the players good-looking and much of the acting over-pronounced. Rednikova, in particular, sounds like she's reciting lines in a stage play.

But the boy's steady gaze saves this film from its pompous potential, and from the crushing weight of the symbols mentioned above. As played with an astonishing lack of preciousness or guile by Philipchuk, the child anchors the film in the immediate present of the storyline as he also accounts, in a wrenching, utterly believable

way, for its emotional hyperbole. Sanya isn't concerned with the welfare of the nation, but with his mother's happiness: he wants her contented and all for himself, and when this rough seducer intervenes and threatens to take her away — the thiefing of the title is also meant in this sense — he is beside himself with frustrated rage.

Later, the thief works his charms on the boy as well and Sanya is enchanted, though in the process of giving himself over to this dubious father figure, his innocence, as Russia's own, is also stolen away.

The Gershwin Banquet

By ELIZABETH KASTOR

Once upon a time no one thought much about the various ways of pronouncing "bananah." Ira Gershwin understood this.

So on the margin of his song lyrics, he added the phonetic tip — "ba-nahn-sh" — to help anyone singing "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off" for the first time.

In the diminutive now George and Ira Gershwin Room at the Library of Congress's Jefferson Building, aficionados of the composer and the lyricist can study such marginalia and connections, along with George's piano, Ira's typewriter, and self-portraits by the brothers.

The library's Gershwin Collection has been growing for more than 60 years. With thousands of manuscripts, letters, printed music, paintings, scrapbooks and other objects, it is the largest collection in the library's Music Division.

There is a particular poignancy to the raw materials of the cultural icon before it becomes iconic. George Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" was once an unknown and risky creation entitled "An Experiment in Modern Music." Dubose Heyward, lyricist for *Porgy and Bess*, wrote "Then you'll open yo' wings, while" and only later changed it to the phrase in the song "Summertime" that we cannot now imagine being any different: "Then you'll spread yo' wings, an' you'll take the sky."

Much of the collection was given to the library by Ira after his younger brother's death in 1937 at the age of 38, and later by his widow, Leonore, and other family members.

Ira annotated material. And so a telegram from Sam Goldwyn offering condolences on George's death has a penciled note by Ira at the bottom, explaining that the Gershwins were working on a Goldwyn production when George died. Ira wrote that he had asked that they be released early from the contract because, as he thought at the time, George "was having some kind of breakdown." Instead, George Gershwin was suffering the effects of the undetected brain tumor that would kill him.

After Ira died in 1983, Leonore Gershwin supported the collection, spending \$120,000 to buy for the library a notebook in which George had jotted musical ideas. Her will designated a percentage of the income from a posthumous trust fund for the library.

(The Washington Post)

It is necessarily so

By RUTH DELOFF-BEGUN

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the birth of George Gershwin. While musical tributes to the legendary composer are being presented from coast to coast in America, a local group is staging a revue that is notably unique.

From *Gershwin to Second Avenue* artfully combines a selection of Gershwin's immortal gems with some of the charming ditties of the Second Avenue Yiddish Theater, where Gershwin was a frequent visitor.

Through song, dialogue and narration, as well as pointed musical parallels, the revue illustrates the close connection between Gershwin's music and his Jewish roots. For example, explains the performers, the tune of "It Ain't Necessarily So" is actually the same melody as the Torah blessing that has been chanted in synagogues around the world for generations.

Performed by Laya Silber and William Weisel, both accomplished singers and actors, the revue takes us back to the 1920s and '30s of the golden *melange* and the American Dream.

A well-blended combination of Americana and Yiddishkeit, it evokes the aura of the era, bringing home the fact that George Gershwin, along with his brother Ira, was one of the most musically articulate voices of the age.

Songs like "The Man I Love," "Fascinatin' Rhythm," and "Somebody Loves Me" are juxtaposed with Yiddish classics like "Yidl mit n' fidl" (by Abraham Ellstein/Itzik Manger), "Abi Gezunt" (Ellstein/Molly Picon) and the delightful "Mein weib is in der country, hurra!" (Joseph Rumshinsky/Isidore Lillian) to create a palpable sense of time and place.

Silber and Weisel are accompanied on the piano by prolific musical arranger Raymond Goldstein and on the cello by

award-winning chamber musician Rali Margalit.

Adding expertise and professionalism to the stage direction is Johnny Krug, assistant director for the past 25 years of Broadway's *The Fantastiks*, the longest-running musical in the world. Krug is here on sabbatical, as a visiting professor at Bar-Ilan University, and gives the revue an added dimension of inventiveness.

"The show is truly a fine piece," says Krug. "It spans the spectrum of nostalgia for early America and plucks the heartstrings of the Yiddish soul."

From *Gershwin to Second Avenue* is presented as a benefit tomorrow night in the main auditorium of the Alyn Hospital in Ein Kerem (84 Shmaryahu Levin Street, corner of Olswanger St.) at 7:45 p.m. Admission is NIS 50. The performance is sponsored by the Jerusalem Fund for Alyn; all proceeds go to Alyn Children's Hospital and



William Weisel

Rehabilitation Center. For further information, call Adele at (02) 624-7203.

Gesher brings Odessa to Washington

By LLOYD ROSE

City (Odessa Stories), which opened Thursday night at Washington's Kennedy Center, is an adaptation of five short stories and one short play by Isaac Babel. Though spoken in Hebrew, this production by Israel's Gesher Theater is provided with simultaneous translation into English. Babel's stories, and play, deal with life in Odessa, just before the Russian Revolution, primarily the colorful, shady life of the gangsters of the period — sharply dressed young men who plot their heists between prayers in the local synagogue.

This material is rich without being theatrical — that is, great details and very little dramatic movement. *City* is story-theater, which means the delights are largely in the telling.

Director Yevgeny Arye stages the evening on a glass and

wrought-iron set that suggests a 19th-century train station. The characters often slide on and off on platforms that resemble railroad handcars. A raised-grid platform provides opportunities for the actors to subsume theatrically over railings. A largely brass band occupies one area of the stage.

The evening unfolds as a series of tales shared by photographer Hershkovich (Yevgeny Tatarsky) and matchmaker Arye-Leyb (Boris Achonov), sitting on a detritus-strewn Black Sea beach. The stories are sketches of Odessa life, not plot-heavy narratives, and they adapt to theatrical treatment somewhat shakily.

One dealing with young Isaac's experience of a pogrom and another about a chaste meeting between Hershkovich and a prostitute (Natalya Voimlevich-Manor) are the most successful because they are the most emotional. The actors

involved — particularly Yevgenya Dodina as 11-year-old Isaac — perform with exquisite emotional clarity and grace.

Half the stories deal with the career of young gangster Benya Krik (the sardonically stylish Igor Mirkharbanov), whom we first meet while he's being enthusiastically serviced by a prostitute. Krik's saga is something of a tall story and has the repetition and simplicity of a folk tale. After he marries the daughter of old gangster From Grach (Yevgeny Gamburg), he has to deal with the midlife crisis of his father, Mendel (Leonid Kanovsky). The old reprobate has fallen for a

gentle prostitute (played by amusingly sexy Efrat Ben-Zur) and plans to sell the family business and run away with her. Benya and his brothers beat the old man up, and that's the end of that. Subsequently, Benya turns a bungled robbery into a triumph by staging a Mafia-style funeral, complete with his singing of an aria from Puccini.

As a cynical, loving vision of a lost world, *City* has many strengths. As a theatrical piece, it's a little clumsy and overlong, though imaginatively staged and beautifully acted.

(The Washington Post)

NEWS

of the muse

By HELEN KAYE

Channel 2 in stereo

From May 1, Channel 2 will broadcast in stereo on its cable channels and later via its terrestrial transmitters. Channel 2 and Radio Authority general manager Nahman Shai announced the innovation at the recent inauguration of two new relay stations at Tefen and Haifa. These two stations complete the authority's network of 13 relay stations nationwide and will enable the direct reception of Channel 2 broadcasts. The Tefen station (channel 29) covers the central and western Galilee, the Zvulun valley, the Carmel ridge, Mitzpe Netufa, the Nazareth hills, Migdal Ha'emek and the Megiddo-Jenin crossroads. The Haifa station (channel 36) goes from the Hadar to the lower city, out to Bat Galim and up to the south Zvulun.

Calling all adventure-seekers

JCS Productions has begun auditioning hopefuls to participate in the new TV adventure game show *Fort Broyard*, which will be shot on location in an island fort off the coast of France this summer. Look for the application forms in the Hebrew dailies. The 200 finalists from ages 21 to 45 will be tested for strength, agility, decision-making, and smarts, not to mention physical condition. The "quests" at Fort Broyard aren't for the faint-hearted, but there's fun and prizes to be had. The show is due to debut on Channel 2 this summer.

Attendance continues to rise for 'The Fall'

Actor/director Niko Nitai recently retired as artistic director of the Simta Theater in Jaffa, but not from its stage. He continues to perform in the longest-running show in Israeli theater history, his own adaptation of *The Fall* by Albert Camus, which has had an incredible 2,300 performances since it premiered in the '70s. His latest achievement is another one-man show, *Pinuk matrif* ("What Indulgence"), a comedy about a lonely man caught in a programmed world. This Thursday will be the show's 500th performance.

Shall we dance...?

The fourth International Ballroom Dancing Festival will be held at the sports stadium in Ashdod on April 1 and 2. Some 200 couples from ages six to 35 will dip, sway and turn to the sounds of the waltz, the rumba, the samba and the jitterbug as they compete for the titles in three categories that will earn the winners cups, medals and the chance to compete abroad. The contestants, most in their teens, come from all over the country, with 10 couples coming from Europe and Australia. Twenty judges, both local and visiting, will judge for elegance, expertise and pizzazz among European, Latin American and Combination styles. The energetic promoters of all this activity are Boris and Rozana Odikadze who immigrated from the former USSR in 1991, well experienced in the art of ballroom dancing and the organization of international festivals.

Coming soon, for sure: dancer Kim Itoh

He was quite ready to come, but the Japanese Foreign Office nixed dancer/choreographer Kim Itoh's shows here early last month. But he's coming on April 8 to the Jerusalem Theater and on April 9 to the Noga in Jaffa with his company, Glorious Future, and the two shows, *Anata* and *Dead and Alive*. Ticket holders can use their tickets for either show. Just call to confirm.

South African choreography for Inbal

South African choreographer Vincent Mantsoe will be here in June to create a dance for the Inbal Dance Theater which will have its world premiere at the Karmiel Dance Festival in July. Mantsoe is the co-artistic director of the 20-year-old Moving into Dance, or M.I.D., from Johannesburg. The company will also participate at Karmiel, said Haim Shiran, head of the Inbal Ethnic Center at Suzanne Dellal. Shiran encountered M.I.D. when IDT participated in the Dance Umbrella held in Johannesburg last summer. This is the first time that a South African dance company will perform here.

Bolshoi ballerina dies at 88

Galina Ulanova, one of the legends of the Bolshoi Ballet, died recently at the age of 88. She joined the Kirov in 1928, and in 1944 moved to the Bolshoi in Moscow. She was the first of the Russian stars to travel with the Bolshoi to the West. When she retired from dance, she became artistic director of the Bolshoi and continued to teach until shortly before her death.

Solti is laid to rest in Hungary

The late great conductor Sir Georg Solti (1912-1997), born in Budapest, reconnected with his native Hungary after his return to democracy in 1990. In his will, Solti asked that his ashes be interred in his native land. He will be buried next to the man who was his teacher, the composer Bela Bartok (1881-1945).

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Defending Rita

Maybe we should start all over again next year. The hapless 50th anniversary celebrations once again hit a snag, albeit temporarily, this time by crossing Rita, the popular singer scheduled to sing the national anthem at this year's Independence Day extravaganza.

Rita initially withdrew from the program over the weekend after weeks of criticism for the NIS 70,000 fee she reportedly was to receive for her performance.

Never mind that the budget for the entire event was 10 times that sum, and Rita herself might normally have been paid NIS 150,000 for an Independence Day performance. In fact, if there was anything inappropriate about Rita's fee, it was not her acceptance of it, but the offer by the organizing committee.

Rita and other artists claim they would have performed for free if they had been asked, given the honor and publicity they would be accorded for starring in the jubilee celebrations. Though municipalities often compete for entertainers on Independence Day by offering large sums, there is only one national celebration.

It is hardly reasonable, however, to expect an artist to turn down a fee when it is offered, particularly when it is much less than they could have commanded elsewhere on the same evening.

Among all the recent criticisms, the straw that is said to have broken the camel's back was the suggestion by Education Minister Yitzhak Levy that Rita's appearance be replaced by a free performance of a children's choir.

"I decided to give up the honor," Rita explained emotionally on Friday night television. "I just cannot go up on stage and sing Hatikva with great love, the way I wanted to."

Many of Rita's fans and fellow entertainers were quick to come to her defense.

"I don't understand what she did wrong," said Israel Prize winner Yaffa Yarkoni, echoing many others. They also, however, said that she should not have bowed to the criticism and withdrawn. One artist said she should have recognized the criticism as jealousy and ignored it accordingly.

This drama, at least, had a happy ending.

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, who seems to never have enough crises on his plate, took time out from his battle of wills with the US and the Palestinians to contact Rita to express his sympathies.

In the end, Rita offered to donate her entire fee to a hospital for children with cancer, and Netanyahu pledged to raise an even greater amount for the same cause.

All's well that ends well, as they say. But if there is a lesson in this overblown episode, it is that jealousy, and the associated national obsession with salaries and inequality, has gotten a bit out of control.

There is no excuse for public officials, particularly those enjoying patronage jobs with little real responsibility, to earn incredible salaries. And it is hard to imagine that it is really necessary to pay salaries of NIS 300,000 or NIS 400,000 per month to certain executives in the private sector.

But why begrudge a performer who is contributing her all to a national celebration for what, in her case, is a modest sum? As critics of the movie *Titanic* found out, its enormous \$200 million price tag turned out to be a bargain, since the film is expected to gross over \$1 billion. This is not exactly an argument for Independence Day celebrations on the scale of Hollywood productions, but it demonstrates that sometimes you do get what you pay for.

Unlike a commercial effort, where success can be measured in a nice round number, in the jubilee's case it will be impossible to measure whether, in the end, its turbulent planning paid off. What we do know is that, like any celebration, it will be hard to enjoy if we cannot stop thinking about the cost.

Perhaps the greatest contribution to the celebration would be if we could allow ourselves, just for a second, to find a happy medium between uncritical pride and obsessive criticism.

One trait of great entertainers is that they can make us feel proud, in the best sense of the term. Not only are pride and patriotism valid emotions, but they can motivate us to do better than express petty envy of the talented among us.

Catastrophe

YOSEF GOELL

Many of Israel's Arab politicians have been vociferously pressing to focus today's Arab Land Day commemorations around the theme of *al-Naqba* — the catastrophe that befell the Arabs of Palestine in 1948. Their intention is to slavishly copy the Palestinians of the newly autonomous areas and still disputed territories, who have decided to hold *al-Naqba* memorials as a counterpart to Israel's jubilee celebrations next month.

The *al-Naqba* commemoration among the Palestinians of the terri-

both civilian and military — to reverse the tide and to establish Israel. For Israeli Arabs to seek a demonstrative commemoration of that aspect of their tragic history is a sad retrogression in the evolution of their relations with the Jewish state of Israel.

In a free society such as Israel, no one can order anyone to celebrate wholeheartedly or mourn fully anything that goes against their deepest grain. While it is certainly legitimate for the State of Israel to demand that Israel's flag fly over all schools and state institutions in

The events of 1948 were indeed a catastrophe for the Arabs of Palestine, but the real guilt for 'al-Naqba' lies with the Arab leaders of the time

ties and their diaspora is perfectly understandable, even though it clearly is a propaganda device orchestrated by the Palestinian leadership in their current diplomatic confrontation with Israel.

The events of 1948 were indeed a catastrophe for the Arabs of Palestine. As opposed to the finger of blame that today's Palestinian political and religious leaders will be pointing at Israel, however, the real guilt for *al-Naqba* lies with the Arab leaders in Palestine and the surrounding Arab world of that time.

It is they, who by their intransigent rejection of the slightest sliver of a compromise with the Jews of Palestine — from the 1938 British partition proposals to the UN Partition decision of 1947 — brought an unavoidable catastrophe down on the heads of their hapless people. The 500,000-600,000 Palestinians who fled their cities and villages to become the Palestinian refugees, and the hundreds of villages and urban neighborhoods which were abandoned — and for the most part razed — were the direct result of a murderous war which that Arab leadership launched against the Jewish population.

This war, which for its first four months the Arab side was winning, cost the Jews 6,000 dead —

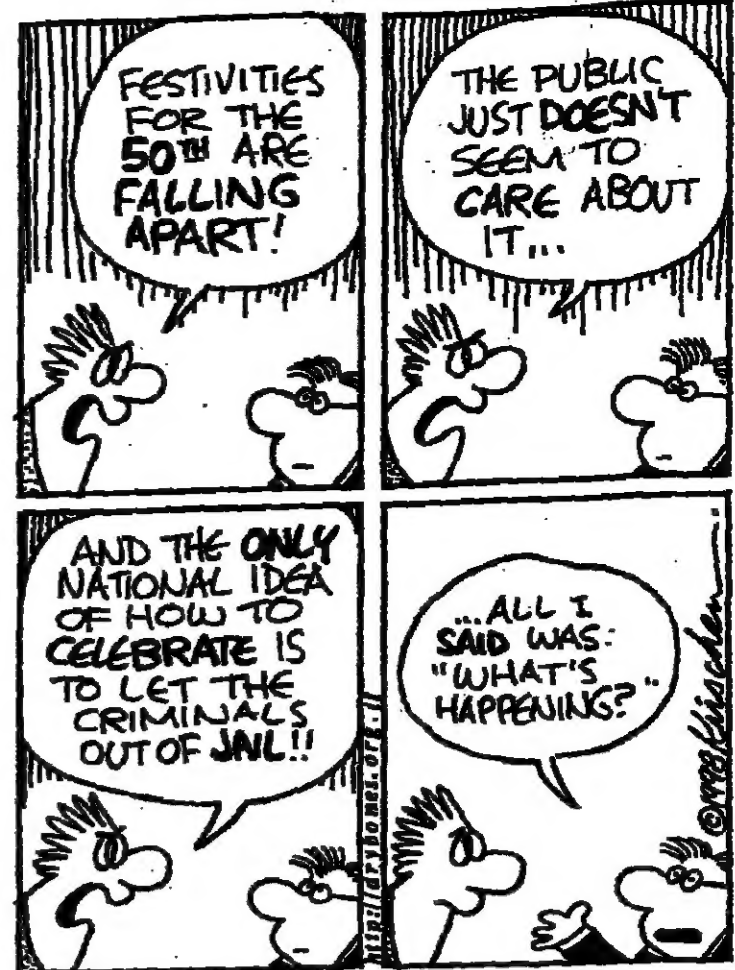
the Arab sector, it was always futile to expect Israeli Arabs to show profound joy in celebrating Independence Day.

For as long as our Yom Ha'atzma'ut celebrations continue to be focused around the War of Independence, we cannot reasonably expect our Arab citizens to celebrate their defeat, joyfully. But there is a world of difference between seeking to impose artificial expressions of Israeli patriotism on our Arab citizens and their choosing to initiate a new holiday, marking their historical catastrophe — after having consciously refrained from doing so for the past half a century.

The main problem confronting Israel's Arabs — like that of any ethnic minority which came about through military defeat — is to win the trust of the Jewish majority of this country. Israel's Arabs, despite the catastrophe of 1948, have long been the best-off Arabs in the Middle East both economically and even more so in terms of life chances such as low infant mortality, longevity, health, education and democratic rights.

It will be extremely difficult for Israel's Arabs to make further meaningful progress towards greater equality with the Jewish majority without winning and fortifying that majority's trust.

Dry Bones



Celebrating *al-Naqba*, with all the barely veiled anti-Israel rhetoric that will accompany it, is exactly the opposite of how our relationship should be evolving.

In a broader sense, the problem is one of establishing a healthy balance between bitter memories of the past and the very different behavior essential for forging a healthy coexistence in the present and the future. We need only look to Yugoslavia, where in the last decade hundreds of thousands have been killed, maimed and driven from their homes over events which occurred 700 years ago between different Christianized tribes and the invading Moslem Turks.

Very similar lessons could be learned from the cases of Northern Ireland, where the civil war revolves around 400-year old hatreds; and of Canada's Quebec, whose radical francophone leadership is determined to dismember one of the happiest countries in the

modern world in an attempt to reverse the defeat of General Montcalm on the Plains of Abraham nearly 240 years ago.

The Arabs would also do well to take a page out of the history of the Jews, a people noted for its historic catastrophes. Some among us continue to rail against cultural "Hellenization" which recalls the Antiochus of Hanukkah and also demand we shun today's Italy because of the catastrophic defeats we suffered at the hands of the Romans in 70 and 135. Earlier this decade there were those who demanded we boycott today's Spain because of the Spanish Inquisition and expulsion of the Jews 500 years ago.

Luckily, in these cases, the protagonists of the present and the future won out over the purveyors of historic hatreds.

The writer comments on current affairs.

Room for concern

YOSSI BEN-AHARON

There is a saying in America that "what's good for General Motors is good for America."

Traditionally, Americans believe that a person who has successfully managed a large industrial concern can take on any position in government, from CIA director to president.

Here, we believe that what's good for the IDF is good for Israel. Our country was born into a state of war that threatened our very existence and that trauma continues to dominate our judgment to this day.

I have great respect for our military. We owe the IDF our lives and our security. Yet we must begin to realize that not every general is good for every post. Some can be very capable in civilian life, while some are mediocre, and some are useless.

Long years of service in the military molds one's thinking. It has to be orderly, disciplined and tough. The army teaches the soldier to distinguish very quickly between opening fire and holding fire. Dealing with shades of gray can be confusing, and can cause hesitation which could jeopardize

a soldier's life and his mission. This is why governments usually refrain from appointing soldiers to conduct diplomatic negotiations which are complex and belong to the "gray" sphere. As a rule, nego-

Another retired general, former chief of staff Ehud Barak, was asked what he would have done had he been born a Palestinian. He could have answered, for example, that he would have

Not every general is good for any post; some can be very capable in civilian life, some are mediocre, and some are useless

tiations between the superpowers on reducing nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles were conducted by civilians, while military experts served as their advisors.

In recent weeks, a number of senior retired generals have made statements that illustrate the point. The comparison that the former head of military intelligence, Shlomo Gazit, made between the knitted kippot and the swastika exposed not only his bigotry but also his inability to make his point except by an extreme black-and-white example.

A group of retired officers who wanted to express their displeasure with Netanyahu's conduct in the peace process chose to repeat, word for word, an open letter to the late prime minister Menachem Begin, which they had published in 1978.

A closer look at the names in the advertisement reveals a large per-

centage who belong to Labor and leftist kibbutzim. What gives cause for some concern is not the views they hold but the fact that they did not feel the need to review their position, or change one iota, even after 20 eventful years. As a result, their message contained nothing more than shallow, unimpressive platitudes.

Shouldn't we be concerned about the danger of conformism, one-track thinking in the top echelons of our military? More than most of our national leaders, the late prime minister Yitzhak Rabin relied heavily on the military command when making major decisions on issues of national policy. I have often wondered: how is it that not even one officer in the general staff warned him against concluding an agreement with the PLO, and quit rather than take part in a course that could risk the security of the state and its citizens. If indeed there was no such officer — and apparently there wasn't — there is room for concern.

The writer is a former director-general of the Prime Minister's Office.

Windy goodfeel

WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY Jr.

Vietnam, which inconvenienced the North Vietnamese for periods of 36 hours.

The most extensive post-Nazi genocide happened in Cambodia. In 1975 Sen. George McGovern, who had gone down to a resounding presidential defeat three years earlier stressing the need to end the war in Vietnam, was apprised

than 500,000 Tutsis, the bid was made to do something about Kosovo. That is the province within the old Yugoslavia which is 90 percent occupied by Albanians. The 10-percent Serbs began a few weeks ago to engage in what is accurately called genocidal activity, their brief against their neighbors being nothing more than that

This isn't the best of all worlds, and presidential rhetoric can't make it be so

of what was going on in Cambodia. His instinctive reaction reflected his good heart, in this as in so many other matters. What he said was the celebrated, "Why don't we send the Marines to do something about it?"

Why? For lots of reasons, including that Sen. McGovern and a majority of senators had voted legislation forbidding the president from sending military forces to that area of the world. Was it even suggested that these laws be repealed? And if so, that the Marines should have been sent to Cambodia? Stupid question.

THE same day that Clinton inveighed against moral torpor of the kind that immobilized the world when the Hutus killed more

they are Albanians, rather than Serbs.

What happened? The usual culprits, Germany, France — NATO, to speak in round numbers — have come up with what the usual culprits come up with: reasons for doing nothing.

There is of course always the problem of what to do. You are plenipotentiary at the Oval Office. You bring in the chairman of the Joint Chiefs. "Are you aware of what is going on in Rwanda?" "Yes, Mr. President." "Well, do something about it." "Yessir. What?"

In an ideal world the answer to that demoral would be: "You tell me what you're a military technician, I'm not." To which the forlorn answer by the military techni-

cian would be, "Nothing can be done about it." By nothing, of course, one means, nothing that would be politically tolerable. We lost 18 men in Somalia at about the time the ethnic conflagrations lit up a mere 500 miles southwest. Americans were appalled by the losses, and in short order the Somali venture was called to an end. The next time US forces would rally forth into military action to restore order would be in Haiti.

Lloyds of London would have given odds that not more than two Marines would be hurt in that exercise. Somehow it is hard to fault Clinton for making the right humanitarian sounds, when visiting Rwanda. What hurts is the manifest incapacity, in a world of sovereign states and limited resources, actually to reach in and do something about it, especially having renounced colonialism.

John Quincy Adams is here quoted for the millionth time, reminding us that the American people are friends of liberty everywhere, but custodians only of their own. In the best of all possible worlds we would be there 24 hours after the first thousand (hundred thousand?) Tutsis were dead. But this isn't the best of all possible worlds, and presidential rhetoric can't make it so.

(Universal Press Syndicate)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

AUSCHWITZ AD

Sir, — Nehemia Meyers reported an ad placed by the Simon Wiesenthal Center in a subway station in Philadelphia was "tasteless" because it depicts a photo of Auschwitz with railroad tracks running through a building and into a camp with the caption reading, "You are on a crowded train with hundreds of people, only it's 1942, and you're not going home." (Postscript, Feb. 23)

I totally disagree with you, Nehemia. The poster should be taken up and placed in every train in every city in that gigantic graveyard called Europe where governments are now funding the refurbishing of Jewish institutions, synagogues and cemeteries. Why? They say that "their Jews" are no longer there? Do they feel remorse? Guilt? Not in the least! There's only one reason: The tourists are coming! The tourists

ARLENE JACOBY Beit Shemesh.

SWISS TREATMENT

Sir, — In October 1942 my parents succeeded in crossing the border from France into Switzerland, where they were admitted as refugees. Others were not so fortunate, they were sent back by the Swiss border police into occupied France.

For some time my mother and father were interned in a refugee camp in the North of Switzerland, separated from my father who had to work in a labor camp. After months from a number of families against this separation, they were reunited and interned in refugee camps in the southern part of Switzerland, near Lake Geneva.

My parents used to tell us children about their experiences as refugees in Switzerland and did not mention any maltreatment or inappropriate practices by the people who were in charge of the camps. The only complaints they had were about the food. Not that

it was not enough, but that it was not kosher.

But I do have in my possession a photo of my mother, taken in a Swiss refugee camp during Pessach 1945 with, in front of her, a piece of matza on the table. I also have a photograph of my brother and a girl dressed up as a bride and groom for a Purim party in the camp.

It might be that other refugees had different experiences and that they were treated less well. But it would be unfair to generalize or give the impression that Jewish refugees in Switzerland were maltreated, as one gets from Alan Morris Schom's report, commissioned by the Simon Wiesenthal Center, "The Unwanted Guests: Swiss Forced Labor Camps, 1940-1944."

MINNY MOCK Jerusalem.

BARAK'S GAFFE

Sir, — I was amazed to what lengths Susan Hattis Rolet went in her column "Barak and Hamas" (March 10), to explain away (spin?) Ehud Barak's controversial remarks re Palestinian youth and terror.

First she quotes at length from a similar gaffe by Yitzhak Shamir in 1977 in a kind of childish "if Shamir boomed why can't Barak" defense, instead of faulting him for not having learned from Shamir's faux pas.

Then she praises him for understanding the frustration of the Palestinians. You don't have to be a brilliant ex-general to do so. I'm sure that 99 percent of adult Israelis, including the prime minister and his cabinet also understand.

The problem is how to handle this frustration and what weight to give it in the overall picture. Does the other side want to understand our very real security needs? Do they keep their promises?

Barak's remarks were unfortunate at best and stupid at worst, and this article is an insult to the intelligence of the Israeli public.

ISRAEL ZUNDER

Ramat Hasharon.

SMASHED WINDSCREENS

Sir, — I was astonished to hear that a group of vandals calling themselves "The Committee for Road Safety" have smashed windcreens of Arab cars in the Hebron area.

A shattered windscreen is synonymous with death and injury of the vehicle's occupants, so the use of the term road safety in this context is anathema.

IVAN POPE

Netanya.

FROM OUR ARCHIVES

65 years ago: On March 30, 1933, *The Palestine Post* reported that the German government had declared a universal boycott against all Jews of all professions and businesses as a reply to the boycott against Nazi Germany planned by Jews abroad.

50 years ago: On March 30, 1948, *The Palestine Post* reported that the 737 "illegal" immigrants to Palestine who arrived aboard the Hagana ship *Yehiam* and were brought to the port by British destroyers were forcibly transferred to the s.s. *Empire Rival* which left Haifa for Cyprus.

25 years ago: On March 30, 1973, *The Jerusalem Post* reported that Defence Minister Moshe Dayan had asked his supporters to rally round the Labor-Mapam Alignment and urged settlement in the administered territories.

Alexander Zvielli

JP 11/11/50



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Sunday, March 29, 1998
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Spin Cycle

Round and Round in the Search for Meaning

By PETER APPLEBOME

ALMOST from the moment the bullets stopped flying outside Westside Middle School in Jonesboro, Ark., the explanations and analysis began whizzing by.

It was guns. It was the violent culture of the South. It was the violent culture of American media. It was bad parenting. It was the breakdown of the family caused by liberal politics or economic stress. It was violence against women. It was lax juvenile justice laws.

There was much that was true and valid in the instantaneous groping for meaning that followed the horrendous shooting incident in which two young boys are accused of killing four girls and one teacher, and wounding 10 others. But to many students of American culture, there can be something sadly diminished, and ultimately misleading, in the ritualized rush to instant judgment — or the rush to instant spin and advocacy — that now follows each cataclysmic lurch of the news cycle. And it is worth asking amid the flood of questions that the

A tragedy in Arkansas looses a torrent of analysis. But a lot of it is just advocacy.

shootings leave in their wake whether the babble of interpreters provides insight or just sows more confusion and cynicism.

"Not only in the media but in the so-called helping services — the shrinks and social workers and counselors and the proliferation of support groups — we now have a mob of meaning makers and interpreters of why things happen," said Larry Rasmussen, a professor of social ethics at Union Theological Seminary in New York. "There was a time when the religious community was the locus for that, but now it happens all over the place. The question is whether that provides more clarity or whether something serious is lost amid all the verbiage."

There is, no doubt, something entirely natural and even valuable in the anguished analysis that events like the Jonesboro shootings set in motion.

In some ways, it helps fill an intrinsic need for coherence and meaning in the face of unfathomable events. In his book "News Values" (University of Chicago Press, 1996), Jack Fuller, the former publisher of The Chicago Tribune who is president of the Tribune Publishing Company, argues that at a time of information overload, making sense of events, rather than just reporting them, is an increasingly critical part of the



Fitting the pieces together: Investigators marked a bullet hole in the wall of Westside Middle School in Jonesboro, Ark. Two boys were charged in a deadly shooting spree.

journalistic franchise.

"It can be an invitation to be banal or insufferably preachy, but done well, people need to have some context, need to make sense of an event," Mr. Fuller said.

"The more profoundly resonant the event, the more people need to fit it somehow into an emotional or moral context."

But the profound resonance of the Jonesboro shootings has not always lent itself to

equally profound responses. Antigun groups leaped on the incident as an occasion for activism and spin. "Our children's teddy bears are subject to more regulation than are the firearms causing this public health epidemic," said a spokesman for an antigun group sponsoring a day of protest May 2 on behalf of the 50,000 young victims of gun violence over the last 10 years.

On one of the television shows endlessly

dissecting the event, Oliver L. North, the former Iran-Contra figure-turned-politician-turned-radio-personality, said it was "unconscionable" for gun-control advocates to try to make political hay out of the tragedy. Then he substituted his own spin, saying that as a life member of the N.R.A. and as someone who grew up "with a .22 rifle in one hand and a fishing rod in the other," the tragedy proved that the respon-

sibility for raising kids rests with parents, not Federal, state or local governments.

It is a reminder how much of what passes for analysis is really little more than advocacy.

"Instead of just going there and yanking on the heart strings, we've now got armies of pundits ready to hold forth on a moment's

Continued on Page 11

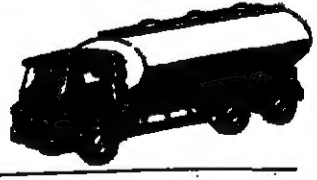
Democracy in China?
Another long march.
By Seth Faison

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New World Order
The oil cartel is making some noise again, but it's the sound of one hand clapping.
By David E. Sanger

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Just Business
Foreigners find something to like about American cultural imperialism.
By Edmund L. Andrews

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Sorry About That

Africa Gets the Clinton Treatment

By JAMES BENNET

PRESIDENT CLINTON has had precious little to offer in terms of new financial help during his 12-day tour of Africa. But he has been dispensing regret by the shovel.

With his trip more than half over, the President has regretted American participation in slavery; American support of nasty African dictators during the cold war; American "neglect and ignorance" of Africa; American failure to intervene sooner in the Rwandan genocide of 1994; American "complicity" in apartheid, and even something that happened, or didn't happen, on another continent — the failure of the United States to act sooner to end the bloodshed in Bosnia.

(Mr. Clinton has also regretted the questions he has been asked at many public appearances about his claim of executive privilege in the Monica S. Lewinsky matter — but that is another story.)

No President in recent memory has spent so much time spreading contrition abroad. Mr. Clinton's odyssey of apology — or at least of muted remorse, mostly for other Administrations' errors — is a product of a man and a historical moment that would have been unimaginable, say, 10 years ago, during the Presidency of Ronald Reagan. The reasons for it say a lot about both Mr. Clinton's foreign policy and Mr. Clinton himself.

"If we had the cold war on, Clinton would not be in a position to do these things," said Rep. Charles Rangel, the Manhattan Democrat, who listened approvingly to Mr. Clinton's mea culpas last week from his vantage point in the President's traveling delegation. But, he added, there was another reason for them: "There's no personality in the world like Clinton."

True, this President has not apologized to Paula C. Jones, but he once confessed to a roomful of wealthy Democrats that he thought he raised their taxes too much. He has a penchant for feeling others' pain. And, his aides argue, he is now putting that to good use as a foreign policy tool.

With the cold war over, President Clinton has focused his at times ad hoc forays into foreign policy on expanding trade, limiting the flow of weapons of mass destruction, controlling international crime and protecting the global environment. Those are goals that



The Clintons in traditional dress last week at a gathering in Accra, capital of Ghana.

Continued on Page 10

The World

Singing the Cartel Blues

By DAVID E. SANGER

WASHINGTON In the glory days of OPEC a quarter-century ago, a decision to cut oil production and raise the price of the world's lifeblood commodity invariably shook markets around the globe. There would be endless speculation about what it all meant for Mideast peace, the North-South power games between the industrialized nations and the under-industrialized, America's inflation rates, Japan's growth prospects and the price of plastic garbage bags.

So last weekend, when Saudi Arabia, Venezuela and a non-OPEC nation — Mexico — announced in Riyadh that they would cut production to lift remarkably low oil prices, what happened? Surprisingly little.

The price of crude oil did jump, from about \$13 a barrel to \$16, which made it the biggest victory in years for the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. But many analysts doubt the higher prices will hold in these days of oil glut. Wall Street shrugged.

The question in the Middle East was not whether this would alter the balance of power between the Arabs and Israel, but whether Saudi Arabia, already running a \$5 billion budget deficit, might now get up the revenues for much-needed improvements in health care and education.

And while motorists across America may not be burning off 90-cents-a-gallon gasoline this summer (the price spotted last week at stations in the Washington suburbs), few economists predict that rising prices will choke off the nation's boom times.

"In the old days the question was low or high prices, and everything rode on those

numbers," said Daniel Yergin, who has long chronicled the geopolitics of oil. "Now the question is low or very low prices."

The cartel, accustomed to power moves, has been forced to desperation moves, Mr. Yergin noted, as countries "try to readjust to the new realities of supply and demand."

Some of those realities are temporary, starting with the warming effects of El Niño and the industrial slowdown brought on by the Asian economic crisis. Others are far more long-lasting, chiefly the emergence of new oil producers that are using computer technology to dramatically reduce the cost of exploration, and drilling technology that reaches deeper, far more efficiently.

Faced with an oil glut, OPEC finds its bark has lost some bite.

All this has changed the politics of oil considerably. During OPEC's heyday, starting with the 1973 oil embargo, the cartel controlled half the world's production, a statistic that turned King Faisal of Saudi Arabia into a one-man economic superpower. And respected economic opinion makers (and the Saudis) saw nothing but more price increases in the future. After all, oil is the ultimate scarce resource.

Twenty-five years later, the economics look different. Today OPEC commands about 40 percent of world production, about the same as the combined production of the

United States, Russia and China. The OPEC-engineered price increases of the late 70's and early 80's brought in a host of new, more independent producers.

And cheaper technology meant that almost everyone could play, with much of the new activity in the Atlantic Basin, from Angola to Colombia. The result is that the ratio of known global reserves to annual global production is now far higher than it was in the late 70's.

Market Forces

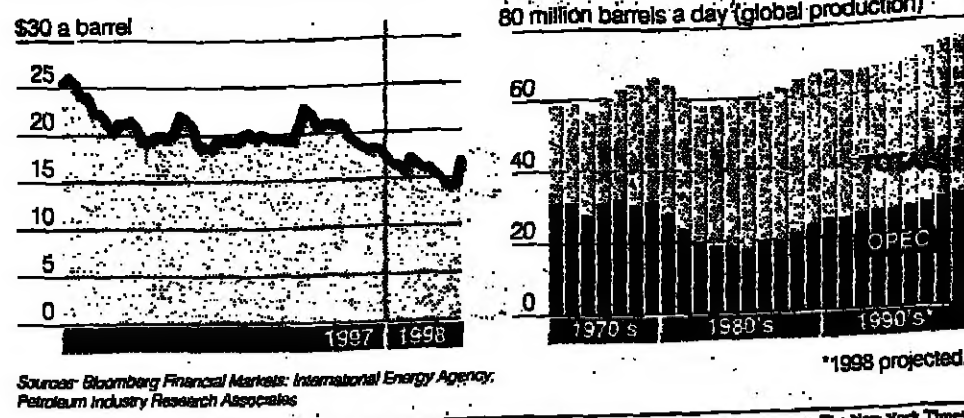
That doesn't mean the world's oil problems are over — far from it. But it does mean that market forces rule. "The world is dramatically changed," said Robin West, chairman of the Petroleum Finance Company in Washington. "It is really transparent and efficient."

Just look at what has happened in the past year. First, the United Nations began letting the Iraqis produce again in small amounts, with the nation's output likely to increase if it fulfills the weapons inspections commitments it made last month. (The State Department said last week the initial inspections were going "very well.")

In November, OPEC raised its official production quota, because so many countries were cheating anyway. Bad timing: The Asian financial crisis hit at exactly the same moment, reducing demand in the world's fastest-growing energy market by half a million barrels a day.

Then came El Niño, everyone's favorite scapegoat, which further dampened demand during the winter. It got to the point where the world was running out of storage space for all the oil that was building up. Prices dropped 40 percent, to nearly their lowest

Oil Economics 101: Price and Production



Sources: Bloomberg Financial Markets; International Energy Agency; Petroleum Industry Research Associates

level, when adjusted for inflation, since around the time OPEC came into existence. Suddenly a lot of oil-producing countries looked vulnerable. Mexico feared that its recovery from the peso crisis of three years ago could be imperiled, which prompted it to take a leading role in pressing for last week's cutbacks. Russia, desperate for revenue (because it is incapable of collecting taxes), worried that the oil-price decline would hurt an economy that can barely stand the shocks of ordinary commerce.

A New Psychology

Indonesia, a longtime OPEC member, was counting on oil — one of its few exports priced in dollars — to bring in hard currency that could support its hemorrhaging currency. In fact, the budgetary assumptions behind the International Monetary Fund's rescue plan for Indonesia are being recalculated because of the collapse in oil prices.

Indonesia is symptomatic of the psychology of oil producers these days: While they are desperate to see prices go up, they are fearful of cutting production only to discover that the market is still glutted.

"We do not want to reduce production to find out that other countries, especially those which do not adhere to quotas, are flooding the market and taking our valuable customers," Saudi Arabia's Oil Minister, Ali al-

Naimi, said recently, sounding like a man whose job used to be a lot more fun.

Actually, Indonesia did a relatively good job of diversifying its economy — a better job than most of the Persian Gulf states. Mr. West notes that the Gulf nations have turned in some of the worst economic performances in the world over the past decade.

But the Suhartos and the Saudi ruling family still have a common problem. Easy money, which is what oil money used to be, bought what could pass for loyalty. It kept peace among the Saudi tribes and the distant Indonesia islands. But when the money evaporates, so can stability.

OPEC's days are certainly not over: markets swing to extremes, and when they do it accentuates perceptions of who is powerful and who is not.

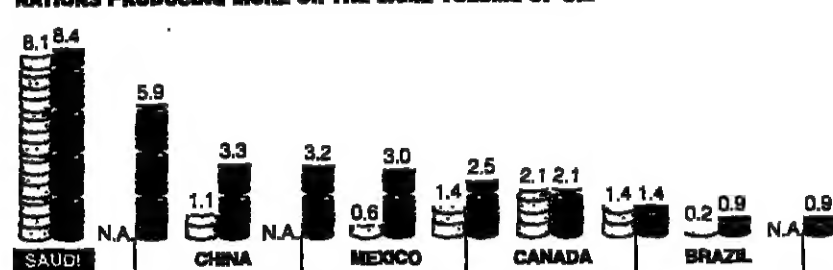
In the 70's, the Persian Gulf looked ready to inherit the world; in the 80's that title went to the oil-less Japanese, and these days, with the microprocessor the world's latest indispensable product, it's impossible to walk around Washington without hearing someone talk about how the rest of the globe is lining up behind the "American model" of capitalism.

Big revenue flows have a way of leading people to hold, if not always accurate, predictions.

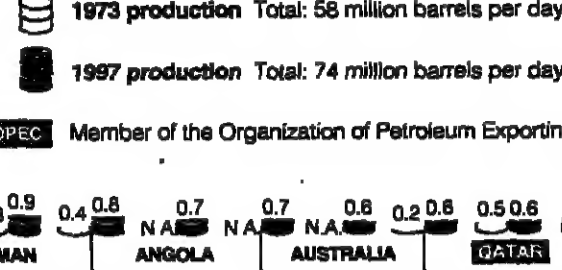
Then and Now: The World's Major Oil Producers

In the last quarter century, nations like Britain, China, Norway and Mexico have become major oil producers. Annual production, in millions of barrels per day, in 1973 and 1997.

NATIONS PRODUCING MORE OR THE SAME VOLUME OF OIL



NATIONS PRODUCING LESS OIL



Sources: British Petroleum Statistical Review of World Energy; PIW, Energy Intelligence Group

*United Arab Emirates: 1973 figure is for Abu Dhabi. †1973 production for U.S.S.R. 1997 Russia only.

Dueling Mullahs

Iran's Gladhandler Takes on the Leader

By ELAINE SCIOFINO

WASHINGTON ON "Clean Air Day" last month, Iran's President, Mohammed Khatami, took public transportation to work. Accompanied by his chador-clad wife, Mr. Khatami got into a communal taxi, then a bus, then another taxi, rather than use a gas-guzzling limousine. The next day, most of Tehran's newspapers ran front-page photographs of him chatting to a fellow passenger — a woman — on the bus.

In his seven months as President, Mr. Khatami has eaten with government employees in the cafeteria of the Presidency and visited shops, schools, hospitals and food ration lines — all unannounced.

Political gimmicks? Yes. An effort to enlist popular support behind his ideas? Of course. But the most interesting thing about these populist maneuvers is that they underscore a crisis within Iran's unique, often mystifying power structure.

A Paradox

At its heart, Iran's system of government is organized around a paradox: The Islamic Constitution, based on the thinking of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, recognizes that one "supreme leader" has the authority, directly from the Prophet Mohammed and his successors, to create a government and to rule. So ultimate authority rests not with any popularly elected President but with a cleric elected by his peers.

But Shiite Islam is not terribly hierarchical, and a Shiite clergyman is actually forbidden to obey another blindly; each is required to use his own judgment on any given issue. And, in a formal sense, the function of the clerical establishment is to advise — but not to govern. So there is room for contention within governing circles, and that is what Mr. Khatami is using now.

This contradiction existed in theory when Ayatollah Khomeini was alive, but in those days there wasn't much opportunity to question his judgment, given his stature both as a religious scholar and as the maker of the revolution. Even then, there was enough room for maneuver to make decision-making unwieldy and unpredictable.

Since Ayatollah Khomeini's death in 1989, the supreme spiritual leader has been Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, a man who lacks the religious credentials and political standing of his predecessor. He has never enjoyed the universal respect of the religious establishment or public adulation.

Enter Mr. Khatami, a political figure who

is a respected cleric in his own right. He seems determined to bolster his own power center, and use it to champion certain secular goals of his constituents — young people, the women and the worldly — while at the same time bringing them into the system of Islamic government rather than bringing it down. Although he is not a contender to replace the leader — he is not a scholar of religious law — the policies he is pursuing are subversive of any notion that supreme authority really is vested in any one cleric.

And that has sparked an extraordinary debate even within the religious establishment over the role of the leader. Some believe in the principle of one supreme leader but do not accept Ayatollah Khamenei's authority; others believe that the leader should play only a spiritual role and not interfere in politics.

The reason the debate is so important is that under Iran's Islamic Constitution, the leader controls the military, the judiciary, the security and intelligence services and radio and television. The President, by contrast, runs the economy and the government bureaucracy. But the leader can set the broad policies of the government and can interfere when he sees fit.

President Khatami has already proven that he is serious about changing Iran. He has allowed more freedom of speech and association, clamped down on officially-sanctioned thugs operating in the name of God and begun to impose the rule of law. But open criticism of the leader is still off limits.

One student leader, Heshamtollah Tabarzadi, was beaten and his newspaper closed down late last year when he said that the leader should be elected directly by the people for a limited term, rather than by an elected Assembly of Experts with religious credentials.

A Lasting Crisis

Much more serious is the case of Grand Ayatollah Hussein Ali Montazeri, who was Ayatollah Khomeini's designated successor until Ayatollah Khomeini himself shoved him aside. Since then, Ayatollah Montazeri has been unable to move freely, speak publicly or teach at the seminary in Qum. This month, shopkeepers in his hometown of Najafabad went on a one-day strike to protest his treatment and a group of his religious followers sent a letter to Iran's most senior clerics calling the restrictions on him unconstitutional.

"The crisis of legitimacy is not going to go away," said Shaul Bakhash, a historian



President Mohammed Khatami makes an appearance in his office cafeteria.

who writes extensively about Iran. "The regime can suppress it but it keeps emerging." One factor he cited is that "other leading clerics — including Montazeri — have a stronger claim to religious leadership than Khamenei himself."

In the United States, George Tenet, the Director of Central Intelligence, told Congress recently that Iran was in the grips of a "genuine struggle" between "hardline conservatives and more moderate elements." But casting the struggle in such familiar political language misses the point.

President Khatami, for all his populist style and yearnings, remains a loyal member of the ruling religious elite. Both he and Ayatollah Khamenei are considered descendants of Mohammed. Mr. Khatami professes belief in the Islamic revolution, the Islamic Republic and the supremacy of the leader.

He also picks his battles carefully. Take the case of the novelist Salman Rushdie. Yes, Ayatollah Khomeini sentenced him to death. But in Shiite Islam, believers must follow a living religious leader. So Ayatollah Khamenei could easily nullify the order. But Mr. Khatami has never spoken publicly about it.

So Mr. Khatami will cajole, and try to outflank, his fellow cleric even as the current system continues to fray. Meanwhile, the clerical establishment has already begun to groom former President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani as a potential successor to Ayatollah Khamenei, and his religious credentials are even weaker than those of the current leader.

Africans Are Getting The Clinton Treatment

Continued From Page 9

require a great deal of international cooperation.

But the end of the cold war has also meant that Congress has lost interest in the developing world. The Administration's spending in Africa and elsewhere has sagged steadily since 1992, weakening one of its chief levers in this and other parts of the developing world. Seen in this light, compassion can be a low-cost adjunct to development money.

'We Were Wrong'

Still, Administration officials believe that expressions of remorse are also helpful in soothing countries still smarting from decades of perceived American high-handedness.

"For the big United States to come here and acknowledge that we've made mistakes, too, I think is empowering to the people of Africa," said Samuel R. Berger, the national security adviser. "It does enable us to say this partnership is real, and partnership means being honest with each other and dealing with each other in a different way."

Mr. Clinton's expressions of compassion also serve a domestic political purpose by playing to one of the President's most important constituencies. "African-Americans are waiting to hear that there is a mutually beneficial, reciprocal partnership that will represent mutual growth and affirming of the humanity of African people, whether in Africa or America," said the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, the special envoy to Africa.

But such compassion has both limits and risks: Limits because, as Mr. Clinton's trip has demonstrated, these nations are still eager for direct assistance; and risks because too much apologizing can make the President look weak back home.

In fact, all week long, Mr. Clinton's advisers angrily criticized reporters for focusing on the contrite moments. But some advisers seemed aggravated and even embarrassed by the President's willingness to offer apologies — not all of which were in the script. Some sought to play down the President's contrite remarks because they undercut their preferred message about Africa's future.

"The problem is he announces that we want to talk about the new Africa," said one White House official, "and those comments are not about the future." This dynamic produced the odd spectacle of White House aides minimizing Mr. Clinton's willingness to be candid about the past.

On Wednesday in Botswana, for example, Mr. Clinton said that "we were wrong" to participate in the slave trade. The White House had repeatedly said before the trip that Mr. Clinton would not apologize for slavery, since to do so would be backward-

looking (not to mention irksome to many Americans who feel they have nothing to apologize for because they had nothing to do with slavery). But the President was apparently moved that day by a speech by Yoweri K. Museveni, the Ugandan President, about the long struggles of African nations.

Mr. Clinton said later that he departed from his prepared text to make the comment "based on my feelings about the situation and my reading of what would be appropriate."

By the end of the week, Mr. Clinton appeared to be mulling his mea culpas. Officials insisted that the President was pitching "his remarks and thinking into the future." Here in South Africa, while the President acknowledged, in response to a question, that the United States was "complicit in the apartheid," he quickly pointed out that Americans outside the Federal Government helped put an end to the white regime.

And Mr. Clinton's contrition about Rwanda did not seem to mean he planned to rush in anywhere else anytime soon to stop ethnic violence — though his comments might keep oppressors in Kosovo guessing. "We're going to have to work this out through the U.N.," Mr. Clinton said on Friday, when asked to specify his plans for preventing future genocide.

There is no question that Mr. Clinton's contrition has played well here. Every regret has been loudly applauded; a Rwandan audience interrupted Mr. Clinton three times after three successive sentences to celebrate his acknowledgments of three different mistakes in dealing with the genocide there.

But they have also applauded every time Mr. Clinton promised some form of aid — even though the amounts have been as relatively low as \$500,000 (for crowd control in Ghana).

Waiting for Action

This fiscal year, the Administration is spending \$700 million on development aid for the 48 countries of sub-Saharan Africa. In 1992, the high-water mark for such assistance, it totaled \$840.3 million. Mr. Clinton said here that he wants to restore aid to that level, but his advisers seemed to despair of persuading Congress to go along. "I have no idea," said one, when asked how the White House would pull it off.

That political reality may explain why some in Mr. Clinton's delegation are worried about whether the Government will match its contrition with action. After Mr. Clinton addressed the Parliament here, Kweisi Mfume, the president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, said action "really determines whether or not this has real worth, rather than just an airing of polite words."

The New York Times
Who? Britain

It's not a
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The Nation

Who? Me a Mason? Britain Sees Threat

By WARREN HOGE

FREEMASONRY, the mysterious and ritualistic fraternal society that began in Britain more than 350 years ago, has only one secret left — its membership list — and now the Government is trying to make it public.

Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, demanded this month that judges who are Masons be publicly identified. He said that if he doesn't get voluntary compliance, the Government will pass a law compelling them to reveal lodge membership.

For centuries, Freemasons took an oath listing the punishments for revealing the names of members or breaking other confidences. A Mason's throat would be cut, his tongue torn from his mouth and his bowels

longer unknown to outsiders, referred to as "profanes" in Freemason-speak. It is accomplished by pressing a thumb on the space between the knuckles, with the exact position depending upon one's level — apprentice, fellow of the craft or master Mason — and then gripping.

Prince Charles Declines

The only publicly known names of Masons are those of royal figures like the current patron, Prince Michael of Kent, the occasional celebrity like Arthur Conan Doyle or Peter Sellers and various past Princes of Wales. The current Prince, Charles, turned down an invitation to join, and his father, Prince Philip, is a member but never participates.

In the United States, George Washington was a Freemason, as were Irving Berlin and Louis Armstrong.

While many people find the rituals of Freemasonry a risible diversion, concern has been growing about the number of Masons thought to be in positions of influence, particularly in law enforcement, and what kinds of favored treatment they afford one another.

Masons have always resisted attempts by officials to learn the identities of their members. A portion of the Mason code compels them to form a "column of mutual defense and support," language that investigators suspect has been used to protect lawbreakers in the ranks from police inquiries.

Parliament's home affairs committee last month conducted hearings into Freemason membership on three police forces responsible for well-known miscarriages of justice. Michael Higham, a former Naval Commander who is the Grand Secretary of the London-based United Grand Lodge, the premier institution of world Freemasonry, acknowledged about 20 names on a list only after being threatened with a contempt-of-Parliament order.

Over the years, a number of cases have spurred calls for the end of secrecy. In the late 1960's the head of the Obscene Publica-

An Ancient Body of Men

Freemasons trace their origin back to the medieval guilds of stone masons, attributing their symbol of square and compass to that craft. Although lodges, which are made up of at least seven masons, were established prior to the 18th century, the first Grand Lodge was established in 1717 in England. There are lodges in nearly every country and about 5 million members worldwide, with about 2.9 million American and 350,000 British masons.

FAMOUS MASONS, PAST AND PRESENT

Louis Armstrong
Neil Armstrong
John Jacob Astor
Mustapha Attaturk
Stephen Austin
Irving Berlin
Simon Bolivar
Ernest Borgnine
James Boswell
Omar Bradley
William J. Bratton
Robert Burns
Eddie Cantor

Casanova
Marc Chagall
Walter P. Chrysler
Sir Winston Churchill
Ty Cobb
Buffalo Bill
Edward VII
Edward VIII
Duke Ellington
Douglas Fairbanks Sr.
W. C. Fields
Sir Alexander Fleming
Gerald Ford
Samuel Colt
Davy Crockett
Cecil B. DeMille
Sir Arthur Conan Doyle
Henry Ford
Benjamin Franklin

Clark Gable
Giuseppe Garibaldi
John Glenn
Harry Houdini
Sam Houston
Al Jolson
Rudyard Kipling
Fiorello La Guardia
Charles Lindbergh
Franz Liszt
Harold Lloyd
Douglas MacArthur
George Marshall
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Rupert Murdoch
Robert Peary
Theodore Roosevelt
Franklin D. Roosevelt
Paul Revere

Roy Rogers
Nathan Meyer Rothschild
David Sarnoff
Sir Walter Scott
Peter Sellers
Jan Sibelius
Joseph Smith
John Philip Sousa
Stendhal
Harry Truman
Jonathan Swift
Voltaire
John Wayne
George Washington
The Duke of Wellington
Oscar Wilde
Darryl Zanuck
Florenz Ziegfeld

George Washington in his freemason's apron.



Sources: Grand Lodge of the State of New York; "The Concise History of Freemasonry"



The New York Times

If a bloke can't wear a goatskin and wave a wand in peace...

burned to ashes. Still, most of the details of their recondite rites have slipped out.

To become a Freemason, for instance, a man must present himself outside the closed door of a lodge in shirt-sleeves with the left breast bared, a blindfold across his eyes, a hangman's noose draped around his neck, a shoe on one foot, a slipper on the other and one trouser leg rolled up. Upon entry, he is confronted with a dagger pointed at his bare nipple and the chanting of men in blue goatskin aprons with wands in their hands and ornamental chains draped across their chests.

Even the notorious secret handshake is no

tions Squad sponsored a convicted pornographer as a member of his own lodge. In the 1970's there were a number of cases where leading criminals were members of the same lodge as senior police intelligence officers. In the early 1980's one of Britain's "most wanted" criminals, Leonard Gibson, was found to be the Worshipful Master, or head, of a lodge that included eight police officers.

A Meeting and a Beating

In 1988 a father and son accidentally wandered into a meeting of Freemasons dominated by local policemen at a hotel in Blackburn. The two were beaten and charged with assault when they refused orders to leave. The Lancashire police had to pay them \$280,000 in damages.

"The case demonstrates just how badly the administration of justice can go wrong when police, solicitors and private citizens with a personal interest, such as a hotel

manager, are all in the same Masonic lodge," said Martin Short, the author of "Inside the Brotherhood."

Freemasonry has its roots in the traditions of medieval stone workers who built cathedrals. The "free" Masons were the specialists, higher achievers than common bricklayers or rough hewers of stone. As they traveled from one construction site to another, an organization grew up to support them away from home and guard the skills of the craft. By the 1630's the lodges began their transformation into gentlemen's clubs, which became formalized with the creation of the Grand Lodge in 1717.

From the beginning, the lodges developed close links to the political establishment. An early patron was Frederick, Prince of Wales, beginning the Royal Family connection.

These days, people join to achieve a Main Street respectability and tap into civic and business networks. The Grand Lodge in Britain prides itself on raising more than \$20 million a year for charity, though much of

the money goes to hospitals and retirement homes of the Masons themselves. The average Freemason age has risen to 55, and the membership is predominately white Protestant. All Masons must declare their belief in the immortality of the soul and the existence of a supreme being.

The Grand Lodge represents 350,000 active Masons, all men, in England and Wales, half the number it did just after World War II, when thousands of soldiers sought to continue their male camaraderie in Freemasonry. There are an estimated five million Masons around the world, including about 2.9 million in the United States.

But the institution is in decline and the push to identify members is the greatest challenge its adherence to secrecy has ever faced, the attacks don't necessarily foretell its end. When the Grand Lodge found itself under assault in 1734, Horace Walpole commented that the Freemasons were then in "such low repute" that "nothing but a persecution could bring them into vogue again."

The Search For Meaning

Continued From Page 9

notice with various simplistic notions of what just went down," said Mark Crispin Miller, who teaches courses on the media at New York University. "We don't use the word 'propaganda' much anymore, but the constant heavy drone of knowing voices out there is largely a chorus of propagandists talking at us."

The Long View

And while the Arkansas shootings struck many as an entirely appropriate vehicle for examining important issues, particularly gun use and violence, many of the pat explanations fell flat.

The South may in fact have more guns than the rest of the nation. But given that the legacy of guns and violence dates from colonial times, that does little to explain the recent rash of shootings in Jonesboro or Pearl, Miss., or Paducah, Ky.

And just as House Speaker Newt Gingrich drew much criticism with his pronouncements that Susan Smith killing her children in South Carolina or a gruesome killing in Chicago a few months later were arguments for electing Republicans, many observers said the search for quick meanings in complicated events can get in the way of the search for deeper ones.

"One thing religion has, which is not very popular in the media, is the long view of history," said Donald W. Shriver, president emeritus of Union Theological Seminary, who teaches a course on religion and the media at Columbia University. "Jews, Christians and Muslims rely on documents 2,000 and 3,000 years old, not on today's headlines. I wish news people were able more often to raise serious questions about the long-range meaning of events without trying to answer them. That would be a better contribution to moral and religious reflection than premature moralizing."

Others say that in the rush to instant judgment, it's not just the answers that fall short, it's also the questions.

It's Nolsy Out There

June Jordan, a professor of African-American studies at the University of California at Berkeley, notes that the overall frame for the coverage in Jonesboro — How could it happen in a nice small town like this? — differs sharply from similar inner-city tragedies, where the context is often the inherent depravity of the urban environment and its inhabitants.

"So much of what we hear through the media, comes through such a racialized prism," Professor Jordan said.

Mr. Fuller and many journalists

argue that the noise level of contemporary society is so high and the quantity of information so heavy that the question is not whether those in the media and elsewhere should struggle to make sense of it, but how well they do it.

"We need to make sense of things, but that doesn't give you a license to be simple minded or leap to cosmic conclusions based on virtually nonexistent facts," Mr. Fuller said. "The way to do this properly, and the way it's done by people who do it best, is to take a situation as it is, complete with the elements of uncertainty, and deal with it on that level. It's not to make sweeping generalizations based on trivial pieces."

It may well be that people are perfectly capable of sitting out what is spin and what is more important and seeing an episode like Jonesboro both as an occasion for valid — even

Everybody has an answer. But some of the questions leave a lot to be desired.

essential — arguments about gun control and a case with broader dilemmas beyond knowing.

Many people are skeptical about putting concise meanings on very complex events. Thus, when asked the inevitable — "Why?" — Karen Curtner, the principal of Westside responded, "That is a hard question, and I don't think there is an answer out there that we are looking for."

This rush to quick judgment is unlikely to end. In a society addicted to fast food, E-mail and ever-faster computer chips, a demand for instant analysis seems inevitable, even logical. The real question is whether that coexists with a more questioning scrutiny that realizes the pat answers and spin are only part of a much bigger picture.

George Steiner, the literary critic and classicist, is one who is doubtful. "I think the sound-bite mentality cheapens thought," he said. "Imagine Dostoyevsky. There are some incidents like this, two boys killing other children, in his famous diary. Imagine what Dostoyevsky would do with that. He would deal with the transcendently important question of evil in the child. Today the editor would say 'Fyodor, tomorrow, please, your piece. Don't tell me you need 10 months for thinking. Fyodor tomorrow.'"

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The World

Democracy in China: Fear, Loathing, Halting Steps

By SETH FAISON

AS China struggles to become a more modern nation, it is only a matter of time before the leadership concedes that in a modern state, leaders are elected, not self-selected.

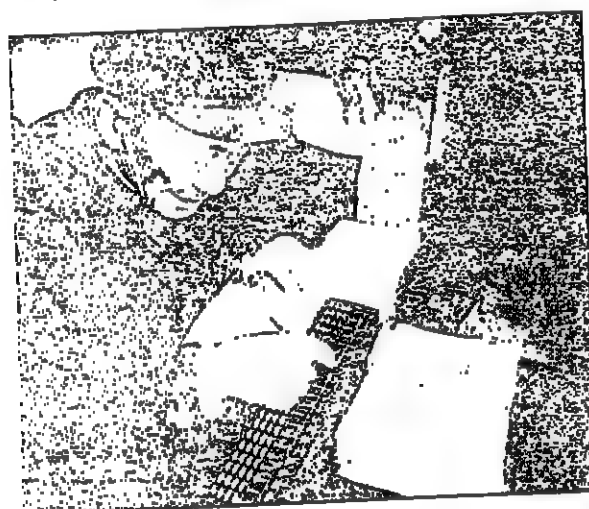
The question is: How much time? Back in 1987, when China's leaders began an experiment of holding elections at the village level, Deng Xiaoping predicted that it would be 50 years before China held nationwide elections. At the rate things are going, that may have been optimistic.

Ten years later, the right to vote remains limited to the place it started, the villages sprinkled across China's vast countryside.

It might seem logical that these elections would inevitably exert upward pressure, and lead to voting for leaders in counties or towns. But the village elections are no herald of real democracy. They are held without exception under the control of the local Communist Party organization. Even in the cases where voters have a genuine choice between two candidates, both have arrived on the ballot only after being deemed acceptable to the higher authorities.

China has undergone sweeping economic and social change in the 1990's, but remarkably little political change. The people have gained an enormous amount of personal freedom — to choose where they work, where they live and how they spend free time — without gaining any real say in how their national political leaders are chosen. For now, political power resides firmly in the hands of a small group of self-selected men.

At the National People's Congress, a gathering this



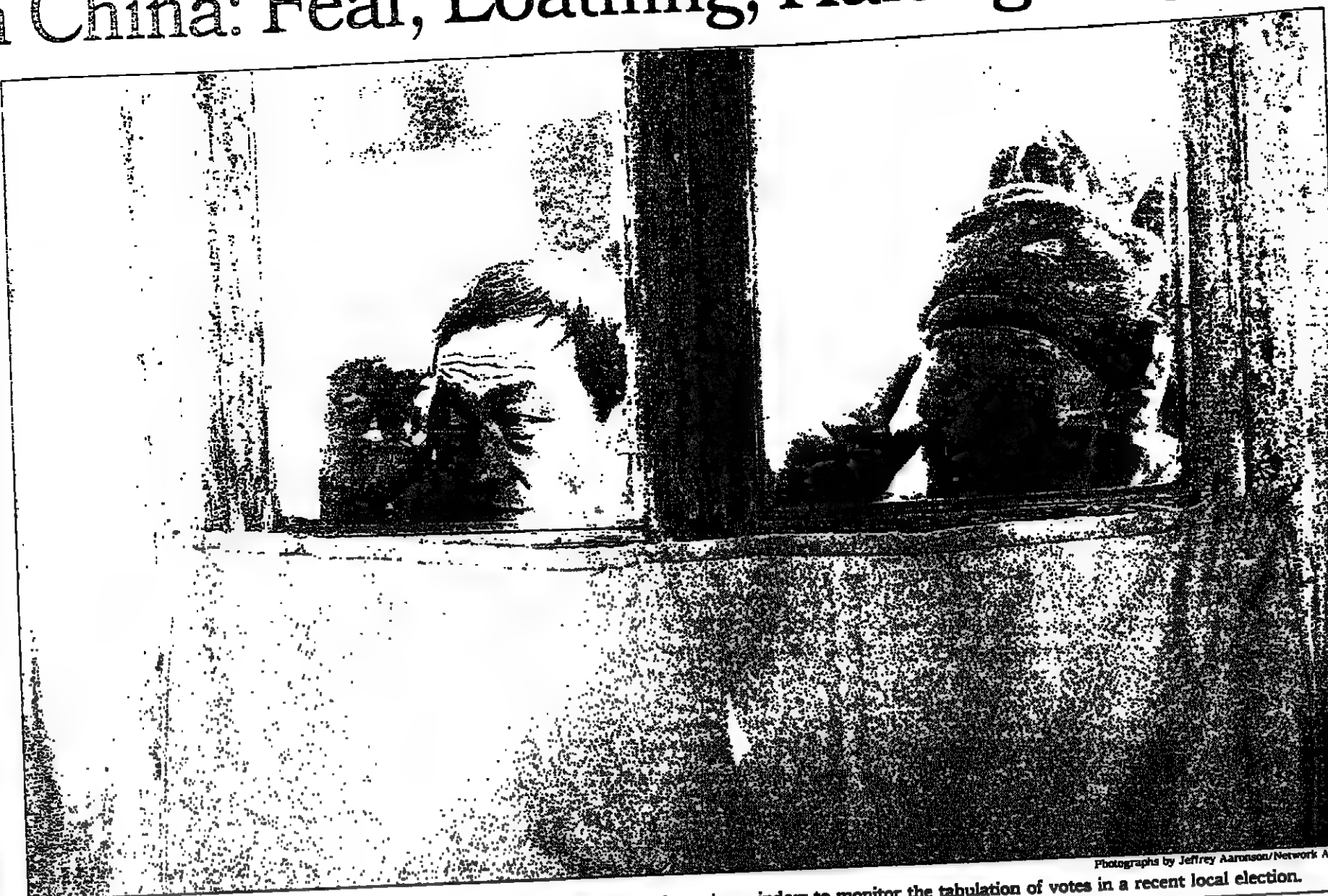
An official in Matizi counting votes with an abacus.

month of China's legislature in Beijing, a new Cabinet was unveiled with a dynamic leader named Zhu Rongji as the new Prime Minister. He announced a broad overhaul of the central government. But no one takes seriously the assertion by the authorities that Mr. Zhu was elected by the legislature.

Village elections and the government overhaul in Beijing are each attempts by China's leaders to improve their outdated political system without sacrificing central control. Chinese leaders, when asked why they did not speed up political reform, have often responded that a large percentage of China's population is still illiterate, and that it would be dangerous to allow them to vote.

In recent years, ordinary Chinese seem to have accepted the absence of any political voice, as long as the standard of living has risen. But growing access to information allows the Chinese to compare their lives with those of people in other countries, and there will be no way to suppress rising expectations completely.

The authorities are looking anxiously down the road to a day when the people, no longer worried about simply meeting life's basic needs, start to make more political demands. The authorities have seen it happen in other countries where the emergence of a middle class has inevitably meant a call for greater rights.



Photograph by Jeffrey M. Anderson/Network Asia

Curious and mistrustful, residents of the village of Gujialing in China peered through a window to monitor the tabulation of votes in a recent local election.

Now, groups of visiting foreigners are routinely taken into the countryside to observe villagers as they cast their votes for their chief. The tours are conducted in part to show that grant money from international foundations is not being wasted. This month a group sponsored by the Carter Center in Atlanta went to northeast China and emerged, like others before them, mostly charmed by the simple paper ballots, abacus tallies and campaign speeches that were refreshingly unslick.

In the faces of rural voters and impassioned candidates there is palpable evidence that people care who wins and loses. This is more than an exercise in public relations for foreigners or locals, more than a show to satisfy the authorities that a central government directive is duly being carried out.

Still, in many Chinese villages, when visited long before or after an election, residents sometimes laugh at the process of voting. They say the victor is often selected beforehand, with voters instructed in subtle and overt ways whom to vote for. Practices vary from region to region, depending on the imagination of the officials in charge, but all essentially hew to the Party's principle of keeping any real threat to its ultimate authority far at bay.

The true intention of the authorities in conducting village elections is to improve government at the lowest level. Villagers are more adept at determining corruption in their immediate leaders than supervising officials are in their subordinates.

It is a principle that could be applied to more senior levels of government as well. Corruption has become endemic in a system where the official ideology of communism is so outdated that virtually no one believes it, and where money-making opportunities are greatest for those in positions of authority.



A voter deposited his paper ballot in a box in Gujialing as other villagers looked on.

Bertelsmann Swallows Random House

American Pop Culture, Foreign-Owned

By EDMUND L. ANDREWS

FRANKFURT It may not have been quite as shocking as when Tina Brown of the London Tatler and Vanity Fair became editor of The New Yorker, but the book industry got quite a jolt last week when the German media conglomerate Bertelsmann AG announced a deal to buy Random House and become the largest American book publisher.

The biggest American publisher is... German? By acquiring Random House, Bertelsmann will become the publisher of a huge array of best-selling American authors, from John Grisham and Michael Crichton to Anne Rice and Toni Morrison.

Once upon a time, this kind of deal might well have kindled political concerns about foreigners taking over American culture. Michael Crichton himself might have based a xenophobic thriller on it, along the lines of "Rising Sun," his 1992 novel of Japanese corporate hegemony in the United States.

But today things look different. For one thing, American popular culture is more pervasive around the world than it has ever been — probably nowhere more than here in Germany. American authors and titles dominate the best-seller lists in Germany, as they do in most other parts of Europe. American movies and television, translated into local languages, rack up huge audiences around the world. America Online, in a joint venture with Bertelsmann, is one of Europe's biggest providers of on-line computer services.

Even when Americans aren't producing pop culture, they inspire it. Germany's most popular TV comedian, Harald Schmidt, is an eerily direct knockoff of David Letterman. Even Americans who speak no German instantly recognize the similarities to Mr. Letterman's style and set, including the desk in front of a window with a night skyline (of Cologne, not New York).

Far from signaling a threat to American culture, the Bertelsmann deal highlights America's commercial dominance. Even though the United States continues to run a chronic trade deficit, it remains a huge net exporter of popular entertainment. It may not be high culture, but it is profitable culture. And it is being

translated into other languages faster than ever before. By contrast, European companies have increasingly become exporters of money. Last year German companies invested about 10 times as much in other countries as foreign companies invested in Germany. France's situation is much the same.



Translation of "Gone With the Wind," published in Germany by Wilhelm Heyne.

Bertelsmann executives have long made it clear that they want to expand their presence in the American market. Before acquiring Random House, second in size only to Simon & Schuster among American publishers, the company in 1988 bought Bantam Doubleday Dell, the country's fifth-largest commercial book publisher. Bertelsmann also owns book clubs, magazines, record labels, a small stake in America Online and other assets.

Bertelsmann is not the only German company to have entered the American media market. The Stuttgart-based Holtzbrinck Group, a publisher of books, magazines and newspapers, owns three prominent American publishers: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, Henry

The world wants American books. And Germans want to sell them.

Holt and St. Martin's Press.

Bertelsmann executives were particularly happy to point out last week that the United States would account for as much of their sales as Germany. Company executives hope that over the long term the United States will be their biggest source of revenue.

But the most interesting cross-cultural question is whether the Germans will have any more luck than the Japanese. Nearly 10 years ago, the Sony Corporation sent tremors through Hollywood by acquiring Columbia Pictures for \$3.4 billion. Then the Matsushita Electric Industrial Company made even bigger headlines by paying \$6.6 billion for MCA, parent of Universal Studios.

Today, those investments stand out as catastrophes. Matsushita pumped millions into MCA without success. It eventually sold 80 percent of the studio to the Seagram Company for \$5.7 billion — a big loss, because the dollar had depreciated in relation to the yen. Sony still owns Columbia, but it fired its first team of top Hollywood executives in 1996 and took \$2.7 billion in write-offs.

Why did those deals founder? At some level, industry experts say, the Japanese never understood how the American movie industry really worked. They also had good but flawed ideas about how to meld the creative output of Hollywood with their own prowess in producing wildly popular consumer electronic devices.

Maverick

Bertelsmann is making a far more conservative bet. Unlike the Japanese industrial giants, Bertelsmann is buying a company in an industry where it already ranks as a major competitor. Book publishing has been Bertelsmann's core business since its inception in 1835, and the company has remained closer to its roots than most other media conglomerates like Time-Warner or Viacom.

Yet here too there are pitfalls. Analysts note that book publishing is not the most profitable segment of the media industry. Indeed, if Bertelsmann had been a typical American company listed on one of the stock exchanges, it might have seen its shares drop in value as investors worried about the deal's potential drag on short-term earnings. But precisely because Bertelsmann is not a typical company — it is privately held and controlled by Reinhard Mohn, a descendant of the company's founder — its top executives have much more freedom to do what they want.

Whatever the ultimate outcome, German commentators have been amused as prominent American authors and agents mourn the sale of America's biggest "quality" book publisher. Several German critics noted last week that Random House's literary legend is largely out of date, because it publishes mass-market blockbusters as eagerly as any other company.

If anything, German publishers have remained too fond of literary works that are less popular and less profitable. (Not shrinking from controversy, a Bertelsmann imprint recently published the German translation of "Hitler's Willing Executioners," Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's indictment of ordinary Germans in the Holocaust.)

Vera Graaf, a literature editor for the Süddeutsche Zeitung in Munich, said the American tongue-cluckers are off the mark. "It is really ironic that it falls on the 'literary' Germans to rob the 'pragmatic' Americans of their illusions," she said.

ECONOMY

South African Law Is a Bitter Pill for World's Drug Makers

By DONALD G. McNEIL JR.

JOHANNESBURG — Americans who need to visit a doctor here notice it right away: the price of the appointment is a pleasant surprise, far less than it would be in the United States. But the prescription afterward is a shock — sometimes double the charge for the doctor's time.

The national Health Department says South Africans, most of whom live in poverty, pay some of the highest drug prices in the world. But its effort to force down prices has set off a pitched battle between the Health Minister — a doctor and Zulu prince named Nkosazana Zuma — and the powerful global pharmaceutical industry. The stakes are so high that President Clinton put the dispute on his agenda last week during a stop in South Africa on his six-nation African tour.

At issue is a new law that gives Dr. Zuma sweeping powers to open the country to cheap imports, encourage the use of generics and sharply curb the markups that pharmacists charge.

The law is crucial to the mission the new Government has assigned her: to turn inside out a health care system that has given high-quality care to whites while forcing most blacks to wait in crowded public hospitals or turn to traditional healers.

Not only have prescription drugs consumed a huge portion of the public health budget, but half of all drugs in public hospitals are stolen, winding up in the high-priced private sector. At the hospitals, meantime, the cupboards are so bare that some provincial doctors said recently that they could no longer give AIDS patients expensive antibiotics for brain infections.

None of this, however, is why President Clinton cares about what has come to be known as the Zuma law. Rather, American pharmaceutical companies, which control nearly half of the \$2 billion-a-year drug market here through subsidiaries, see it as a threat to their patent rights.

They say the law — which was signed in December and is now tied up in a court battle over its enforcement — seems to arm Dr. Zuma with the power to undo international patent protections and give anyone here the right to make generic versions of prescription drugs.

If the law is allowed to stand, the companies worry that other countries will follow suit. And why stop with drugs? American companies have billions in other intellectual property to protect — from movies to music to software — and the principles involved are essentially the same.

"If the Health Minister thought it was in the interest of public health that those \$10,000 AIDS cocktails be

cheaper, she could just rip off the patents and set up a factory in Cape Town to make them," said a Western diplomat who is fighting the law. "And if the Minister of Health says this is O.K., then the Minister of Education will be able to say, 'Well, affordable computers are in the interest of public education, but Windows is just too darn expensive, so we're going to buy knockoff copies.'"

The Health Ministry denies having any such designs, and insists that it is only trying to cut prices. "The minister has said constantly that we have no intention of abrogating patent rights," said Dr. Ian Roberts, a British consultant to Dr. Zuma who drafted the new law. "We respect the fact that they have an economic value."

On Thursday, Commerce Secretary William M. Daley, visiting with Mr. Clinton, discussed the American objections to the law with Dr. Zuma. Both continue to disagree, a diplomat said, about the meaning of the section of the law that the pharmaceutical companies and the United States Government say they cannot live with.

In this battle, it is hard to spot the good guys — or even a neutral player. There is no consumer lobby here, no Ralph Nader or Consumer Reports magazine, so patients are at the mercy of big business and big government. The local press has been lax, dutifully retyping the propaganda from both sides without explaining the issues to nervous readers. And there has been more than enough brinkmanship to go around.

Merck & Company, the New Jersey-based drug giant, has dropped a \$10 million investment, openly blaming the new law. Britain's Smith-Kline-Beecham said it was rethinking expansion plans. Since the legislation was introduced last May, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Pharmacia & Upjohn and Eli Lilly have all closed their South African factories. While they didn't openly blame the bill, the closures "were partly in response to uncertainty surrounding the legislation," acknowledged Miryana Deeb, executive director of the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association of South Africa.

In Washington, 47 members of Congress recently signed a letter asking the United States trade representative to "pursue all appropriate action" against the law.

And the industry group, the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, lumping South Africa with Argentina and India as "global centers of patent piracy," asked the Commerce Department to put all three on Washington's highest-level list of countries that discriminate against American exports — the first step toward imposing sanctions. (South Africa got off the list only two years ago, when the Government helped stop a Durban hamburger outlet from stealing the McDonald's name.)

The South African Government, on its side, is threatening to bypass the pharmaceutical companies and import cheaper drugs. If drugs don't get less expensive, Dr. Roberts said, Pretoria could up the ante by mandating the use of generics or even directly setting drug prices.

The battle is greatly affected by the quirky, stubborn personality of Dr. Zuma, whose husband is a power broker in the ruling African National Congress party. More important, Dr. Zuma enjoys the absolutely bullet-proof support and affection of President Nelson Mandela.

The dispute is also bitter, and driven by deep suspicions. Virtually everyone interviewed quietly suggests — off the record — that the other side is hatching a plot. Some examples: The Health Ministry is the tool of a World Health Organization cabal that thinks patents on medicines are unethical — or a tool of Indian pharmaceutical companies that want new markets for their private products. The A.N.C. health specialists are Marxists who want revenge on multinationals that evaded sanctions in the apartheid era. The American drug companies are being misled by their local subsidiaries, which have formed cozy cartels to keep profits up.

The two sides disagree even about whether medicines here are cheap or



President Nelson Mandela, left, has been unwavering in his support of Dr. Nkosazana Zuma, the South African Health Minister.

expensive, and they interpret the same words in the law differently. A great deal will depend on how Dr. Zuma enforces the law. That is, assuming it withstands a pending challenge in the courts here and a threatened one before the World Trade Organization, and that the Government doesn't bend to American and European pressure to amend it.

SOMETIMES maternal, sometimes shrill, Dr. Zuma is a human lightning rod beside whom even C. Everett Koop, the combative former United States Surgeon General, seems a milquetoast.

She is pro-abortion, which is not very controversial here, and anti-smoking, which is infuriating the big tobacco companies, she threatened to ban all cigarette ads. She is widely praised for building rural clinics and strengthening primary care. But her threats to close costly transplant units to pay for simpler needs like cataract surgery have angered surgeons, who still boast about Dr. Christian Barnard's pioneering heart transplant in 1967. Meanwhile, she has survived several scandals.

She threw away \$3.3 million of public money on "Sarafina II," a musical sequel to the Broadway hit musical that offered an anti-AIDS message, then lied to Parliament about where the money had come from. To stop news leaks, she invoked an apartheid-era national security law.

Later, she invited a group of University of Pretoria researchers who claimed to have discovered a miracle cure for AIDS to bypass the Medicines Control Council, the local equivalent of the Food and Drug Administration, and bring some of their "cured" patients directly before the Cabinet to plead for funding. Medical experts were aghast when they discovered that human trials had been performed secretly — especially when they learned that the compound, called Virodene P058, contained a poisonous solvent.

Dr. Zuma still defends Virodene. Her critics, she said recently, hate A.N.C. supporters. "If they had their way," she said, "we would all die of AIDS."

Yet her critics in the drug industry say she cuts off dialogue with them, reneges on promises and rammed her drug reform bill through a Parliamentary subcommittee full of A.N.C. allies. Dr. Roberts disagreed, noting there were six days of hearings — "hardly ramming it through," he said.

President Mandela has angrily rejected repeated calls from newspapers and opposition politicians for Dr. Zuma's dismissal.

For her part, Dr. Zuma says she is misunderstood. "Sometimes when people talk about me, they refer to this power-hungry minister who wants to dictate to everybody," she said in a November interview with reporters from the country's largest newspaper chain. "Sometimes when I read the newspapers, I don't recognize myself."

And she denied simply targeting the drug companies. "My fight is for the people out there who need medicine," she said. "Government must also pay less so we can distribute the medicine to the poor. The fight with the multinationals is a consequence of the real fight."

But the two sides can't even agree

on the dimensions of the problem.

The Government says that drugs here are exceedingly expensive. For example, the same drugs in pharmacies in next-door Zimbabwe are frequently half the price or less, because many are Zimbabwe-made generics. Prices in New York can also be cheaper. A tablet of Amoxicillin, a commonly prescribed antibiotic, sells for 50 cents here, compared with 30 cents in New York and just 4 cents in Zimbabwe.

Dr. Roberts, the health ministry consultant, did his own study in 1996 of drug expenditures as a percentage of gross domestic product. It showed South Africa as No. 2 in the world, after Portugal.

But the South African drug makers' association replies that public hospitals, which buy 80 percent of the nation's drugs, pay rock-bottom prices through competitive bidding. Its studies show public-sector prices equal to or below those obtained by international aid agencies. The problem, the drug makers say, has to do only with the other 20 percent of the drugs, earmarked for private pharmacies and "dispensing doctors."

These two views are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Nor is it the case that the high prices affect only the well-to-do. The poor are victims because the huge profits available in the private sector lead drugs off hospital shelves, forcing patients at times to do without or to pay more.

The drug makers blame the distributors for this situation. The drugstore industry has long had a cartel arrangement typical in South Africa — wholesalers mark up about 21 percent and pharmacies mark up 50 percent more. (In the United States, the distribution chain typically marks prices up only 25 percent, pharmaceutical makers said.) Drug stores don't post prices and there are no discount chains.

Dr. Roberts calls the 50 percent markup a "perverse incentive" to sell the most expensive drug. The new law authorizes replacing the markup with dispensing fees that will result in the same modest profit on a cheap prescription as on a costly one.

But the most important change in the law is probably the simplest: Pharmacists must tell customers when a cheaper generic exists, and must sell that medicine unless the doctor or the patient forbids it. (As elsewhere in the world, 85 percent of the most commonly prescribed drugs here have generic equivalents.)

The law also forbids manufacturers from offering cash, vacations or other incentives to doctors who prescribe their drugs. And it requires doctors who sell drugs, often as a lucrative sideline, to get licenses to do so.

The figures are disputed, but some experts estimate that fewer than 20 percent of prescriptions here are for generics, compared with more than 50 percent in Britain and the United States.

Indeed, critics say the drug companies encourage fear of generics. Last June, in full-page newspaper ads showing a weeping baby under the headline "Health Warning! Remain Silent and the Unsafe Control of Medicine Could Cost You Forever," the local manufacturers' association described its opposition to

the Zuma bill.

Although the ad said the association did not oppose high-quality generics, it contended that the bill would "ease the entry into established markets of counterfeit, fake, expired and harmful medicines."

Dr. Aslam K. Dasoo, policy director of the group that lobbies for South Africa's health insurers, called the ad campaign "one of the most inappropriate and bungling exercises I've seen — it rings so hollow when they say they're defending the poor."

But Mrs. Deeb, executive director of the manufacturers' association, said she "completely rejects the notion that we used scare tactics." Unsafe imports are a real threat, she said, and she remains proud of the ad, which helped get the first draft of Dr. Zuma's bill withdrawn for rewriting.

F EARS, real or otherwise, are also at the center of the fighting over so-called parallel imports. Typically, a multinational company makes the same pills in several factories around the world, then designates which lots go to which countries, setting different prices in each. South Africa wants to buy a drug wherever it is cheapest. "That's free trade, isn't it?" said a World Health Organization doctor.

But the 1994 treaty on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights, which South Africa has signed, gives patent owners a "right of importation." The language is hazy, however. Patent owners say it lets them set prices in every country. The Government says manufacturers "exhaust" that right after selling to the first wholesaler. South Africa's law will test that theory.

The United States bars parallel imports, partly out of deference to patent holders and partly because the F.D.A. feels it could not analyze a potential flood of foreign fakes. Britain allows parallel imports, but only from within the European Community.

The Health Ministry says it is foolish to assume it will buy unsafe drugs, adding that it will insist on a paper trail proving the drugs are genuine.

But detractors point to the Virodene mess and say Dr. Zuma has deliberately weakened the Medicines Control Council, which tests drugs for safety. In fact, the new law authorizes her to ignore its rulings. Just last week, a panel she picked recommended that the council be abolished, and the local press reported that its officials were being dismissed.

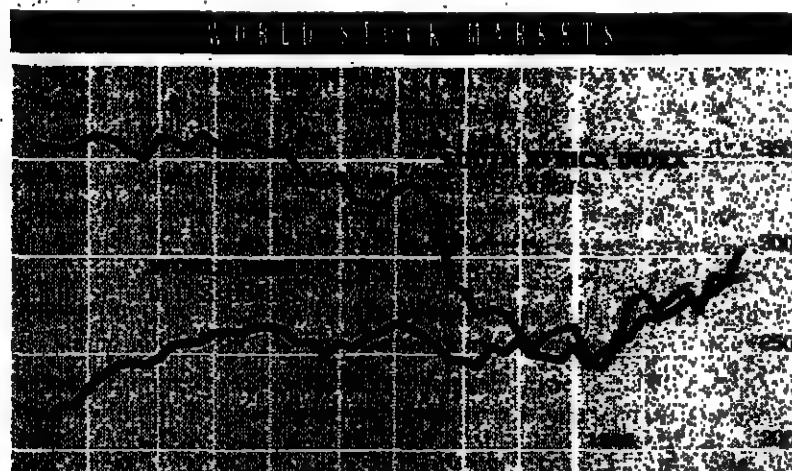
Moreover, the critics say, South Africa's border guards are unable to stanch the flow of illegal immigrants, cocaine, endangered species and even rusted cattle.

"How are they going to catch counterfeit drugs, or drugs that have expired and were supposed to be destroyed but were just repackaged?" asked Thomas Bombelles, spokesman for the American pharmaceutical makers lobby. "Or boxes that sat on a dock in the hot sun for eight weeks?"

TWO adorable 3-year-old orphans in the nursery at the Cotlands Baby Sanctuary and Hospice here drop their lunch bowls as a visitor enters to rum and hug his knees. Like many HIV-positive children, they have swollen glands below their ears, but otherwise seem healthy and happy. Minutes later, the head nurse, Kathy Volkwyn, almost bursts into tears as she answers a whispered question. "Yes," she says, "these babies are probably all going to die."

For Cotlands, the cost of drugs is an enormous issue. The anti-AIDS cocktail that could keep the children alive costs an unthinkable \$1,000 a month. Cotlands — which by South African standards is quite good at fund-raising — can barely pay the \$40 a month it takes to treat each child's ear infections with Ciprobay, a patented antibiotic for which no generic exists.

"We have a hard time paying for milk and nappies," said Reva Goldsmith, the assistant director. "Many medicines become out of the question."



Prepared by Goldman, Sachs & Co. using data derived from the Financial Times/Standard & Poor's Aquarius, World Indices, a measure of stock market performance. The FT indices are compiled jointly by The Financial Times Limited, Goldman, Sachs & Co. and Standard & Poor's, in conjunction with the Institute of Actuaries and Faculty of Actuaries.

Country	U.S. DOLLARS				IN LOCAL CURRENCY			
	Index	Week % Chg.	Week Rank	YTD % Chg.	Index	Week % Chg.	Week Rank	YTD % Chg.
Australia	216.24	1.0	17	8.4	21	3.83	214.16	4.8
Austria	221.21	4.4	3	17.0	14	1.55	210.08	18.9
Belgium	309.78	0.9	18	21.7	9	2.45	288.22	24.0
Brazil	280.97	-1.6	28	9.5	20	1.74	545.75	11.4
Britain	391.11	0.8	20	17.9	12	2.85	344.54	15.3
Canada	247.29	3.0	10	18.4	16	1.58	253.29	16.1
Denmark	510.38	3.3	8	14.1	18	1.24	483.73	16.1
Finland	372.08	0.1	24	33.6	6	2.08	433.01	26.0
France	294.94	3.5	7	23.2	8	2.03	283.49	25.5
Germany	270.11	2.0	14	17.7	13	1.27	255.88	19.7
Hong Kong	358.29	0.1	23	0.4	25	4.50	358.47	0.4
Indonesia	58.58	18.8	1	9.8	28	2.18	308.84	38.7
Ireland	525.58	0.9	19	30.5	7	1.85	537.22	35.3
Italy	180.94	5.3	2	35.8	3	1.14	216.74	39.5
Japan	100.34	0.4	22	5.3	23	0.98	82.88	5.6
Malaysia	223.96	1.8	16	36.2	4	2.28	308.36	25.1
Mexico	1,675.95	3.9	6	7.1	27	1.45	1,591.82	-1.9
Netherlands	484.91	2.4	12	18.3	11	2.01	455.05	20.2
New Zealand	78.46	-0.2	25	0.1	26	4.51	72.33	3.5
Norway	335.29	3.4	8	5.0	24	1.82	342.95	7.3
Philippines	106.03	2.4	13	33.7	5	1.04	197.37	25.1
Singapore	243.04	0.5	21	7.9	22	1.75	177.91	1.8
South Africa	303.68	5.0	3	14.4	17	2.86	330.25	17.0
Spain	377.08	-4.4	34	36.7	2	1.63	443.30	41.3
Sweden	569.52	1.8	15	21.3	10	1.78	664.36	20.5
Switzerland	398.18	2.8	11	16.8	15	1.05	369.91	20.0
Thailand	31.98	-0.3	28	65.7	1	6.39	46.97	30.2
United States	447.44	-0.3	27	12.9	19	1.42	447.44	12.9

COMPOSITE INDICES				
Europe	348.73	2.1	20.6	2.02
Pacific Basin	111.98	0.5	5.8	1.61
Europe/Pacific	210.68	1.6	15.8	1.99
World	239.51	0.7	14.0	1.64

Source: Goldman, Sachs & Co. Exchange rates as of Friday's London close. © 1998 The Financial Times Ltd., Goldman, Sachs & Co. and Standard & Poor's.

Exchange rates				
	Friday	Last Friday	% Chg.	Year Ago
Japanese yen to the U.S. dollar	130.33	130.41	-0.06	123.93
German marks to the U.S. dollar	1.8266	1.8302	-0.20	1.6776
Canadian dollars to the U.S. dollar	1.4184	1.4205	-0.29	1.3613
U.S. dollars to the British pound	1.6892	1.6889	+0.00	1.6373

Sources: Bloomberg Financial Markets; exchange rates as of Friday's New York close.

March 23-27: The Dow Veers Close to 9,000, Then Retreats on Earnings Worries

PRICES	
DOMESTIC EQUITIES	
Broad market	Down 0.34%
S. & P. 500 Index	1,095.44
Dow Jones	Down 1.24%
Dow 30 Industrials	8,796.08
Small capitalization	Up 0.61%
Russell 2000 Index	477.15

DOMESTIC BONDS	
Treasuries	Down 0.50%
Ryan Labs. Total Return	215.95
Municipals	Down 0.69%
Bond Buyer Index	123.09
Corporates	Down 0.43%
Merrill Lynch Master Index	948.64

AROUND THE WORLD	
European stocks	Up 2.14%
F.T.-Actuaries Europe	348.73
Asian stocks	Up 0.49%
F.T.-Actuaries Pacific Basin	111.98
Gold	Up 3.73%
New York cash price	\$303.10

Foreign indices are given in dollar terms.

YIELDS	
BONDS	
Long bonds	5.96%
30-year Treasuries	Up 8 basis pts.
Notes	5.63%
2-year Treasuries	Up 13 basis pts.
Municipals	5.26%
Bond Buyer Index	Up 5 basis pts.



OTHER INVESTMENTS	
Money market funds	5.01%
Taxable average	Down 1 basis pt.
Bank C.D.'s	4.97%
1-year small savers	Down 1 basis pt.
Stocks	1.45%
S. & P. 500 dividend yield	Up 1 b.p.



Sources: Bank Rate Monitor; Bloomberg Financial Markets; The Bond Buyer; Datastream; Goldman, Sachs; IBC's Money Fund Report; Merrill Lynch; Standard & Poor's; Ryan Labs

The New York Times

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Wrong Way on Social Security

Proposals from archconservatives to chip away at a gargantuan Government program like Social Security shock no one. But when an influential moderate like Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan proposes to divert Social Security taxes into private retirement accounts, a flawed idea gains ominous support. Mr. Moynihan's rationale is complex. But it is also misleading and unwise.

Mr. Moynihan exaggerates the financial predicament by pointing to 2029 as the date that actuaries say the Social Security trust fund will empty out. But actuaries also say that annual revenues will continue to cover almost all of each year's outlays. Indeed, the financial gap amounts to only about 2 percent of payrolls and can be eliminated with modest benefit trims, changes in retirement rules and small tax increases. Instead, Mr. Moynihan proposes a cut of up to 30 percent in future benefits, larger even than what is needed to balance the trust fund's books. He does so because his plan includes a second agenda — partial privatization.

Mr. Moynihan would temporarily cut payroll taxes and invite workers to deposit the money saved into individual tax-sheltered retirement accounts. Some will accept the invitation and, depending on the outcome of risky investment, replace some or all of the 30 percent benefit cut. But based on past behavior, most workers will not save for their future. Mr. Moynihan's reasons for cutting revenues of a program that he depicts as near bankrupt are political. He wants to stop Congress from frittering away the current temporary surpluses in the program to support other programs in the Federal budget. He also proposes partial privatization to ward off a more sweeping privatization assault by conservatives.

Private accounts are popular because, if invested in stocks, they can grow faster than money deposited in the trust fund, which is invested in low-

yielding Treasury bonds. Mr. Moynihan warns that liberals who oppose his partial privatization risk having the entire Social Security program scrapped, along with its magnificent record in redistributing money from rich to poor and thereby lifting millions of retirees out of poverty each year.

But Mr. Moynihan refuses to acknowledge the harm his partial privatization scheme would do. Small savings accounts are expensive to administer, threatening to burn up a quarter of a low-wage worker's annual deposit in commissions and bank fees. Besides, the seemingly small return on money turned over to Social Security is partly an optical illusion.

Social Security has promised to pay millions of retirees benefits that far exceed the amounts they pay into the trust fund. Part of the payroll tax that workers turn over to the Social Security system covers these unfunded benefits. If part of the money that workers would deposit in private retirement accounts under the Moynihan plan were siphoned off to pay their fair share of unfunded benefits, then the yield on these accounts would look puny too.

By reinforcing the false notion that private accounts are far superior to public accounts, Mr. Moynihan risks setting off a political process that would feed the conservative goal to replace virtually the entire public program with private savings.

Mr. Moynihan's warning that Social Security looks like a lousy deal for workers should be heeded. The best way to increase retirement funds is to invest payroll taxes in stocks. But rather than having a hundred million workers invest itty-bitty amounts on their own, the trust fund itself, through a process insulated from politics, should invest in equities on behalf of everyone. The Social Security problem is modest. So too are the right solutions.

Dangerous Inertia in Japan

Japan is sinking ever deeper into economic stagnation and confusion of purpose. Every day brings fresh news of another anemic financial rescue effort or an embarrassing disclosure of corruption or suicide in elite circles, including the Finance Ministry. Yet Japan is not just another Asian country in trouble. With an economy twice as large as the rest of Asia's, Japan's health is crucial to recovery in the region and stability throughout the world. It cannot afford to muddle along.

At the core of Japan's problems is the Government's failure to cope with the staggering weight of more than \$600 billion in what are euphemistically called "problem loans." Some experts believe the number to be higher, since Japanese financial institutions often hide liabilities off the books. In the "bubble economy" of a decade ago, when the value of real estate in Tokyo was greater than the wealth of many countries, too few experts realized that lending was based on endlessly rising land values, rather than on potential return.

When the economic downturn hit in the early 1990's, Japanese authorities did not force banks to insure that their loan portfolios reflected the real value of their assets. Instead, Japan cut interest rates nearly to zero to stimulate the economy, which led to even more lending. Much of the lending flowed to Asia, and to companies with corporate links to the lending banks. Reality caught up in the form of currency swings a few years ago, which made it hard for the Asian loans to be repaid.

A similar crisis of non-performing loans para-

lyzed the American savings and loan industry in the 1980's. In a model of what Japan needs to do, the American Government stepped in to force ailing thrifts to write off their bad loans. Many institutions were shut down or merged.

Japanese officials have begun moving in the same direction, but their efforts are ineffectual. The Government's \$238 billion bank bailout, for example, is designed to use taxpayer money to raise the banks' capital strength, restore the confidence of depositors and ease the Japanese credit crunch. But the Government has been reluctant to demand more disclosure, mergers and shutdowns. Instead, it is doling money out as if its primary interest was to protect weak banks from embarrassment.

As for stimulating the economy, pump priming has a bad reputation in Japan. A spending spree a few years ago was widely discredited because of corruption. After hundreds of billions of dollars in deficit spending, the economy is still idling.

Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto is now reportedly preparing a new \$124 billion spending program to stimulate the economy, though its timing and ingredients remain unclear. He needs to act quickly to get Japan back on its feet so that it does not try to export its way to prosperity, which would aggravate tensions with the United States. In fact, Japan needs to import more from Asian countries so they can solve their problems. Coming under outside pressure and criticism is uncomfortable for Japan. Yet if it is to live up to the world's expectations, it has no choice but to act more decisively.

Editorial Observer/BRENT STAPLES

Why Comics Are as Important as Shakespeare

People who write for a living routinely credit heavyweights like Faulkner, Hemingway and Proust with showing them the way. In my case much of the credit goes to comic books. Between 5th and 11th grade, I read almost nothing else. Instead of trashing "The Flash," "Green Lantern" and "The Fantastic Four," my English teacher nudged me toward books that bore no resemblance to "Silas Marner" or that deadly dull "Heart of Darkness." Comics and fantasy paved the way for science-fiction novels like "The War of the Worlds" and "Fahrenheit 451" and eventually for mythology, most notably the "Iliad."

Homer was bloody and fantastical, to be sure. But the essence of his story — the scheming gods dressed up as humans, the epic journey to Troy and the clash of Titans in the field — came as no surprise to me. It had been thoroughly laid out in a classic line of comics that was readily available at the corner store.

The notion that young Americans can access the Western cultural heritage only through a defined set of serious books — known as "the canon" — is wrong on its face. Pop culture has been so thoroughly in-

San Franciscans miss the point about reading.

fused with allegedly "classic" themes that you can glean them from pulp novels and movies.

Purists argue that children need to read the great books in the original. But from a pedagogical standpoint, what matters most is that they engage whatever they read early and deeply enough to make reading, thinking and writing second nature. Whether it is "literature" or "trash" makes little difference.

This simple principle was lost in this month's canon wars in San Francisco, where two members of the board of education claimed they could lower black and Latino dropout rates, and improve test scores, by requiring that 70 percent of the books read in high school come from non-white authors. Beaten back by cries of "literary apartheid," the board dropped the percentages but required that teachers use at least some works by authors that "reflect

the diversity of culture, race and class" of San Francisco, whose students are almost 50 percent minority.

Escalating the factionalism, the gay and lesbian contingent persuaded the board to order that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender writers be "appropriately" identified when their books were used in class.

To this faction, a writer's race and sexual preference seem to matter as much as his or her words. High school students argued vigorously for the resolution, describing books by dead white men as a most grievous hardship. But under existing school policy, they were allowed to choose many of the books they read for class. Of the 10 books required each year, four are specified by the teacher and three are chosen by students and teachers from a recommended list that already has plenty of non-white writers. The students themselves choose the final three, from wherever they wish.

So if students missed out on minority writers, it was probably because they were not choosing them, or because they were not reading beyond what was needed for English class. The problem begins at home, where most of them grow up without books

Clinton's Rwanda Apology Wasn't So Candid

To the Editor:

President Clinton's admission in Rwanda (front page, March 26) that the world community, including the United States, had failed to respond to the genocidal massacres in 1994 there was less than candid.

The Clinton Administration took the lead in opposing international action.

Its policy was a calculated political decision. Shocked by unexpected American military casualties in Somalia and a humiliating withdrawal, Washington insisted that a cease-fire in Rwanda, clearly impossible to attain quickly, had to precede humanitarian aid.

Perhaps the most important single reason for American inaction is still not admitted. Impoverished and perennially troubled little Rwanda had no strategic, political or economic significance. All it had were the mutilated victims of the most horrendous orgy of mass killings in modern times.

DAVID HEAPS
Princeton, N.J., March 26, 1998
The writer was a consultant for the Ford Foundation in Africa from 1960 to 1971.

Acting Too Late

To the Editor:

It is so sad that an American President finds it necessary to call for "global vigilance" against genocide half a century after the Holocaust and the presumed international commitment to prevent future genocides in the United Nations Convention Against Genocide (front page, March 26).

It took the Senate more than 30 years to ratify the genocide treaty, and as the President now concedes in the case of Rwanda, "we did not immediately call these crimes by their rightful name: genocide."

Countries, like individuals, deserve presumption of innocence. But in the case of genocide, we have come to learn that acting too soon is less intolerable than acting too late.

HYMAN BOOKBINDER
Washington, March 26, 1998

Tour Designed for All

To the Editor:

Maureen Dowd's March 25 column about the Rev. Jesse Jackson says

that President Clinton's African tour is "designed to make all American blacks happy," not just Berry Currie, the President's secretary, who is a guest on the tour.

Aren't all Americans, not just blacks alone, happy that, as your editorial of the same day says, "when Mr. Clinton goes abroad, he does so as the leader of a nation unrivaled in its prosperity, technology, military might and cultural influence?"

GEORGE F. NELSON
New York, March 25, 1998

Try Debt Relief

To the Editor:

If President Clinton is serious about helping Africa, he should support debt relief and debt write-off programs for the poorest African countries (front page, March 25).

When much of United States aid to Africa has been to Africa's men with guns, is it any wonder that development has been nothing but a dream?

MATTHEW PARRY
Providence, R.I., March 26, 1998

The Problem Isn't Guns, but Easy Access to Them

To the Editor:

Re the shooting at an Arkansas middle school (front page, March 25):

I own a handgun, which has a trigger lock and is locked up in a gun cabinet. The bullets and clips are in a separate locked container. Gaining access to such weapons was the cause of this tragedy.

We are responsible for the actions of our children.

When I was a child, my father owned several rifles and handguns. They were not locked up, but we knew that if we touched them, we would be in for the spanking of our lives.

Although he went hunting on occasion, he never took us with him and we never asked to go. The difference between right and wrong was ingrained in us as children.

To say that the children in Arkansas didn't know what they were doing is absurd.

RANDY R. WARREN
Indianapolis, March 26, 1998

Then and Now

To the Editor:

Osha Gray Davidson ("Guns for



Felipe Galindo

All Ages," Op-Ed, March 26) notes that rural America is awash with guns, adding that "guns are as readily available to teen-agers and even preteens today as baseball trading cards were to youngsters a generation ago."

Mr. Davidson apparently doesn't know or doesn't care to admit that rural America was awash in guns a generation ago, too, but for some reason we didn't have massacres in

our schools back then. Availability of guns hasn't changed, so something else must have.

JIM SMITH
Pocatello, Idaho, March 26, 1998

No Need for Nostalgia

To the Editor:

In "Guns for All Ages" (Op-Ed, March 26), Osha Gray Davidson plays into the hands of the National Rifle Association by saying "guns are as readily available to teen-agers and even preteens today as baseball trading cards were to youngsters a generation ago."

The issue is not what existed in the past. We are a different society, with different problems, and must consider new ideas to deal with increasingly violent tragedies like the school shooting in Jonesboro, Ark., even if it means a drastic increase in the control of lethal weapons.

At least, the N.R.A. may have to give up one of its most treasured platitudes. After all, will it now say, "Guns do not kill people; children do?"

JAMES O. CHAMBERLAIN
Forest Hills, Queens, March 26, 1998

Russian Politician Is Too Wily for Democracy

To the Editor:

What is it about Gregory Yavlinsky, the wily and ambitious Russian politician, that makes William Safire go positively gaga ("You're All Fired!" column, March 26)? Mr. Safire, for the sake of his readers,

should pose a few questions to Mr. Yavlinsky before the next round of gubbing.

For starters: Why, before the 1995 legislative elections, did Mr. Yavlinsky renege on his promise to unite his forces with the other leading democratic group, thus splitting the democratic constituency and creating a Communist plurality in the Parliament?

Why does Mr. Yavlinsky's faction in the Parliament vote more frequently with the Communists than with any other group?

Why didn't Mr. Yavlinsky's faction vote against the so-called freedom of religion bill that hindered the establishment of "untraditional" denominations in Russia?

LEON ARON
Washington, March 27, 1998
The writer is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.

Prep School for CUNY

To the Editor:

Re "How Open a Door?" (news article, March 25):

What is the feasibility of opening one or more postgraduate high schools for students needing remedial work before entering the City University of New York?

The schools could be limited to four semesters and would emphasize mathematics and reading and writing in English, as well as study skills. There would be no extracurricular activities. Courses in history, foreign languages and science could be postponed until college.

Poor attendance and incomplete or late work could be grounds for dismissal. Student who passed competency exams could enter CUNY.

Those interested in maintaining open admissions and those interested in more stringent admissions standards could support such a program.

DIANE FEDER
Stamford, Conn., March 25, 1998

Lawyers, Clean House

To the Editor:

Your editorial exposing the questionable connection between construction companies' winning government contract work based on their campaign contributions comes at a fortuitous time ("The Old Give-to-Get Code," March 26). A similar problem exists concerning law firms that are aided in receiving government work.

Although the American Bar Association last summer agreed to condemn pay-to-play among bond lawyers and public officials, the banning must take place on a state-by-state basis. In New York that time has arrived. The Administrative Board of the Courts will be meeting soon. A proposal is on the table to prevent lawyers who donate more than \$250 to an official or candidate (or \$1,000 to a political party) from soliciting government finance work for two years. It is ripe for enactment.

ROBERT ABRAMS
New York, March 26, 1998
The writer was New York State Attorney General, 1979-93.

The New York Times
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The Cheapest Computer

To the Editor:

Gordon Silverman's definition of a human being as "the lowest cost, 150-pound, nonlinear, all-purpose computer system that can be mass produced by unskilled labor" (letter, March 26) is clever, but his accounting does not add up.

All that can be produced by "unskilled labor" is the basic capital good. Turning a newborn baby into a "nonlinear, all-purpose, computer system," however, requires a huge investment involving some very skilled labor.

Similarly, in the information economy, computer hardware can be produced by unskilled labor, but the ability to create and understand new software requires ever more human skill. Perhaps man is, after all, the measure of all things.

CHARLES MUNDALE
Minneapolis, March 26, 1998

What's Organic?

To the Editor:

Peter Hoffman's "Going Organic, Chums!" (Op-Ed, March 24) highlights important problems with the Department of Agriculture's proposed guidelines on organic labeling — most significantly, the differences between the regulation Congress intended and the guidelines set forth by the department.

Contrary to Congress's intention, the department's guidelines forbid the inclusion of information about how foods labeled organic are produced. In a free market, consumers should be informed not only about the contents of their food but also about how it was produced. Instead, the Agriculture Department wants to be judge and jury as to what is a "reasonable" concern about our food supply, and anything it doesn't think matters will be removed from the discussion.

KARL SEELEY
Seattle, March 25, 1998

Scouting Stereotypes

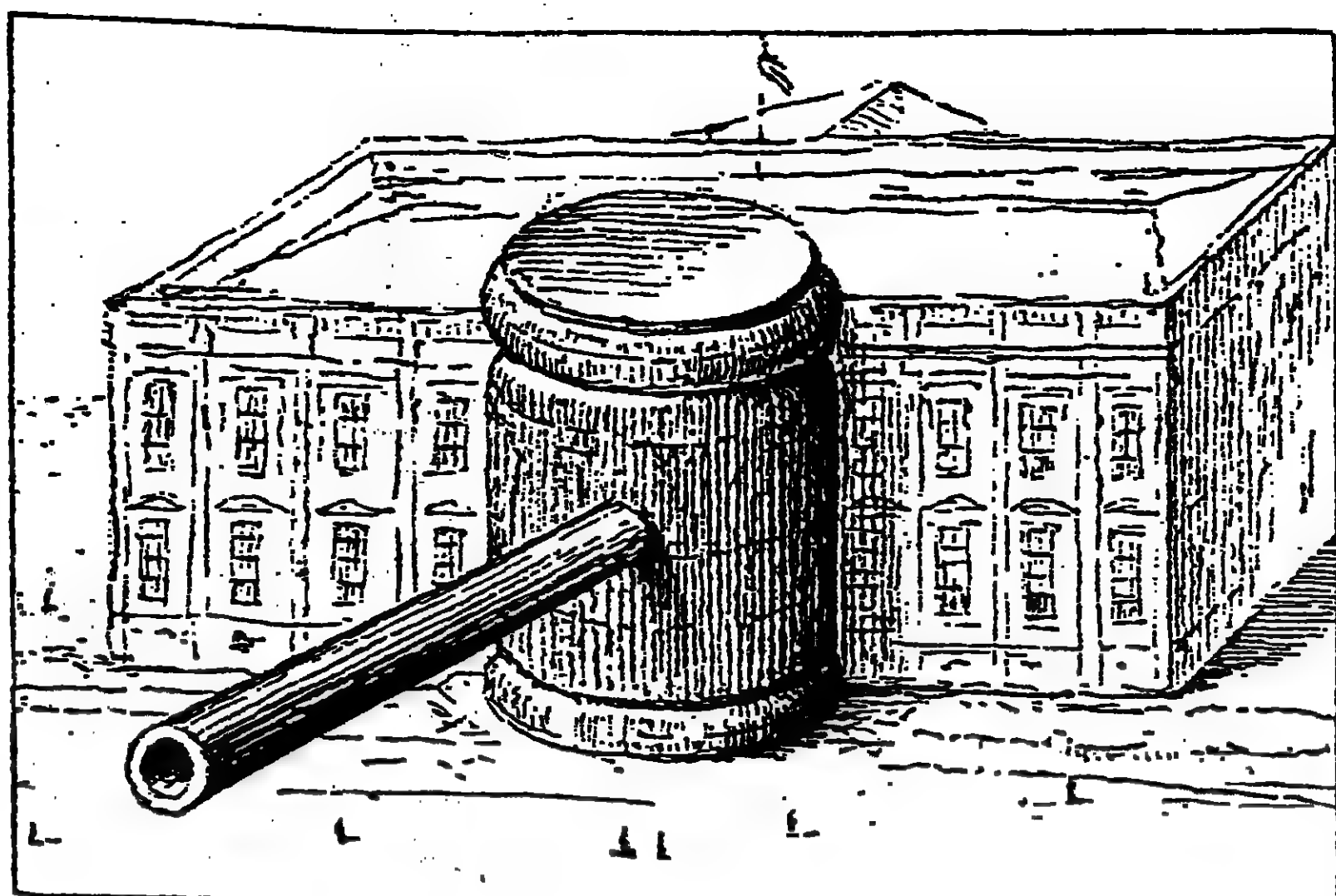
To the Editor:

Your report on the California Supreme Court ruling to allow the Boy Scouts of America to exclude homosexuals, agnostics and atheists from its ranks quotes Chief Justice Ronald George's opinion that "scouts meet regularly in small groups (often in private homes) that are intended to foster close friendship, trust and loyalty" (news article, March 24). This statement implies that gay people cannot foster or possess such virtuous traits, or would be likely to undermine them.

Since the court also stated that troops cannot exclude boys on the basis of race, it is clear that while it is no longer acceptable to hold that members of racial or ethnic minorities are invariably immoral, one can still hold such ignorant stereotypes about gay people.

PHILIP BOCKMAN
New York, March 24, 1998

Wasn't So Candid



Who Wants Justice?

By Orrin G. Hatch

For the last two months Kenneth Starr, the independent counsel and former Federal appeals judge, has been doing the job that Attorney General Janet Reno and the United States Court of Appeals directed him to do: investigate allegations of perjury and obstruction of justice related to Monica Lewinsky.

Many Americans had hoped that President Clinton and the White House would cooperate with Judge Starr's office to uncover the facts and let the chips fall where they may. Instead, we have seen an unprecedented effort to obstruct, distract and undermine the legitimacy of the independent counsel's office, an effort that demeans our proud tradition as a country based on the rule of law.

Ethical requirements bar a special prosecutor from discussing his work; and thus Judge Starr's occasional public statements have done little to counter what an unnamed White House official called "our continuing campaign to destroy Ken Starr."

One may disagree with some of Judge Starr's decisions. His tactics, however, which have been attacked as being too rough, pale in comparison to those used by Lawrence Walsh in his crusade against the Reagan Administration.

For instance, Judge Starr has been criticized for questioning Monica Lewinsky's mother, but Mr. Walsh, during his tenure as independent counsel investigating the Iran-contra matter, interrogated not only Oliver North's wife but also his minister. Mr. Walsh even tracked down veterinary records on Colonel North's dog in an effort to discredit him.

Perhaps most telling, Judge Starr signaled in advance that he would not seek indictments near the 1996 Presidential election that might influence the outcome. In contrast, Mr. Walsh helped torpedo President Bush's re-election effort in 1992 when he issued an additional indictment against Caspar Weinberger, the former Defense Secretary, just days before the election. A Federal judge threw the indictment out a few weeks later.

The attacks on Judge Starr, both public and behind the scenes, are coming from numerous tentacles of the White House scandal control entourage. While the official White House spokesman, Michael McCurry, dodges questions, other mouthpieces show no such reluctance, turning up constantly on the airwaves and in print.

These include people on the Government payroll (like the White House advisers Rahm Emanuel, Sidney Blumenthal and Paul Begala) and off (James Carville and Lanny Davis among them). Their apparent calling is to vilify Judge Starr — witness Mr. Carville's description of him as a "sex-crazed person." We have the President's private lawyers saying Judge Starr is out of control. The lawyers in the White House counsel's office are Government employees supposedly working for the taxpayers, but now they are helping arrange lawyers for witnesses, who then turn around and attack Judge Starr for daring to question their clients.

Even the First Lady jumped in with her "vast right-wing conspiracy" accusation. And there are reports that these same critics are smearing Judge Starr and his prosecutors by spreading rumors about their personal lives.

If Mr. Clinton truly believes what his advisers are claiming, he has an obligation to ask Ms. Reno to fire Judge Starr. Every day, however, it becomes clear that the goal of Judge Starr's critics is not justice, but partisan gain. The White House appears as

interested in the truth as O. J. Simpson is in finding Nicole Brown Simpson's killers.

It is important to remember that when Judge Starr says he has an obligation to determine the truth, he is also reminding the country that some or all of the allegations against the President may well be false. The evidence known to those of us outside the grand jury room is incomplete.

Unlike those who immediately demanded impeachment proceedings, Judge Starr surely recognizes his obligation to proceed cautiously before recommending indictments or referrals to the House of Representatives. At its core, this case is not about sex but about possible high crimes of perjury and obstruction of justice.

While Judge Starr works diligently, the Clinton spin machine works overtime putting out mischaracterizations. Two are especially misleading.

The first is the contention that Judge Starr is involved in a right-wing conspiracy. This is absurd. The media outlets that broke the Lewinsky story, like Newsweek, The Washington Post and The New York Times, are hardly conservative conspirators.

Moreover, Judge Starr's integrity is documented not only by his distinguished legal career but also by the fact that he has received accolades even from liberals. For instance, Arthur Spitzer, legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union, said, "If I was going to be the subject of an investigation, I would rather have him investigate me than almost anyone I can think of."

Even Abner Mikva, former White House counsel to Mr. Clinton, has

Ken Starr is getting blamed, but Bill Clinton is the master of delay.

called Judge Starr a "person of integrity." Sure, Judge Starr once worked for the Bush Administration, but if serving in an administration disqualifies someone from serving as independent counsel, many noted lawyers from both parties would be ineligible.

Distortion No. 2 is that Judge Starr has wasted \$40 million on the investigation, a mantra repeated at every opportunity by the President's defense squad.

This assertion conveniently ignores the fact that, if you measure an independent counsel by convictions, Judge Starr has been one of the most effective since the independent counsel act was passed. He has negotiated 12 guilty pleas and won three convictions. Among those he has brought to justice are a sitting Governor of Arkansas, Jim Guy Tucker; the former Associate Attorney General of the United States, Webster Hubbell; and the President's longtime business partner, James McDougal.

These convictions and pleas, in and of themselves, are of enormous importance and took time to accomplish. In addition, two indictments are pending in Judge Starr's investigation in Arkansas, and he recently persuaded Mr. Tucker to cooperate with investigators, a major victory.

Moreover, the duration and cost of his investigation have largely resulted from two factors his critics conveniently fail to mention.

First, Ms. Reno has asked him four times to begin investigations in new areas: the improper acquisition of hundreds of F.B.I. files by the White House, the unusual firings of those who worked at the White House travel office, the truthfulness of testimony by a former White House counsel, and most recently the Lewinsky matter. If Judge Starr had not taken on these issues, other independent counsels

would have been appointed, at even greater cost to the taxpayer.

Second, stonewalling by the White House and witnesses have caused expensive and time-consuming litigation and have delayed Judge Starr's work considerably. Here are several of the more egregious examples:

• **Elusive Records:** The White House seems to have an unusually hard time finding things (except when it wants to, as with Kathleen Willey's letters). The most famous example was the supposed inability to find billing records of the Rose Law Firm; after a lengthy delay, the records mysteriously surfaced in the White House. This pattern of nondisclosure hindered the Senate's campaign finance investigation and the White-water Committee — documents subpoenaed early in the investigation, like notes made by Bruce Lindsey, a senior Presidential adviser, did not appear until one day after the committee's authorization expired.

• **Bogus Claims of Privilege:** One central aspect of the Administration's strategy has been to withhold information based on spurious claims of privilege, force Judge Starr to negotiate and litigate, and then complain about the delay. The claim of privilege that wasted the most money and time came when Judge Starr sought notes made in a meeting between Hillary Rodham Clinton and Government lawyers. The President's claim of privilege over these documents was so specious that it was rejected out of hand by the Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit, and the Supreme Court declined to review the case. This two-year delay, however, seriously set back Judge Starr's efforts.

• **A Reluctance to Answer Questions:** Most recently, the White House recycled its questionable privilege claims to keep up White House staff members from providing certain testimony before the grand jury. The lengths to which the Administration will go to avoid answering questions has even led, according to press accounts, to the President's claiming executive privilege over conversations between Sidney Blumenthal and Hillary Clinton — conversations that didn't even include the President. These claims almost surely will be rejected by the courts, but not before they have resulted in even more delay and expense.

Anyone fairly assessing Judge Starr's investigation would say that it is proceeding at a reasonable pace and that any delays should be laid at the Administration's feet. Indeed, if the Administration had truly been willing to cooperate, the investigation might be over by now. Instead, the President has tried to shroud his own personal conduct by asserting a privilege meant to protect national security.

When the Monica Lewinsky story broke, I was heartened by the President's promise to provide the public and Judge Starr with relevant information — "more rather than less, sooner rather than later." I was reminded of President Reagan's reaction to the Iran-contra matter, when he announced that he would invoke no claims of executive privilege. With each day that passes, however, this White House seems less and less Reaganesque.

While it has received little media attention, a letter signed earlier this month by four former Attorneys General, including Griffin Bell, a Democrat, was extremely significant. The letter defended Judge Starr and, more important, the office of the independent counsel:

"As former Attorneys General, we know Mr. Starr to be an individual of the highest personal and professional integrity. As a judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia and Solicitor General of the United States, he exhibited exemplary judgment and commit-

ment to the highest ethical standards and the rule of law.

"We believe any independent counsel, including Mr. Starr, should be allowed to carry out his or her duties without harassment by government officials and members of the bar. The counsel's service can then be judged, by those who wish to do so, when the results of the investigation and the facts underlying it can be made public."

I am struck by how this eloquent defense of the rule of law by these former Attorneys General compares with the silence of the current Attorney General. Ms. Reno should speak out publicly in defense of Judge Starr and in support of a full and fair investigation of the facts.

The President must rein in his attack machine. He should redirect his Administration's efforts away from spin, delay and confrontation and toward abiding by the rule of law. □

Liberties

MAUREEN DOWD

Some Vexing Matters

CAPE TOWN When Bill Clinton meets with a foreign leader, he takes on some of the other leader's coloration. With Helmut Kohl, the President looks the satisfied, well-fed burgher. With Boris Yeltsin, the President exudes a ruddy bonhomie. With Nelson Mandela, Mr. Clinton ingratiates himself by standing a bit straighter, holding himself with a bit more dignity.

He is so full of empathy that he was the one who stumbled, as though by gracious proxy, helping the frail Mr. Mandela down the red-carpeted stairs of Tuynhuys, the South African President's house here.

It is touching, in a way, how Mr. Clinton's desire to please turns him into a shape-shifter, visually and politically. But watching the serial personas, the serial sincerity, the serial apologies, one does sometimes long for a blast of authenticity.

And so the meeting of the fuzzy and loose American President and the granite and upright South African President offered a remarkable juxtaposition.

Mr. Mandela has shown the world how to be very popular with a lot of moral authority. Mr. Clinton has shown the world how to be very popular without a lot of moral authority. Mr. Mandela has flourished by forgiving his enemies. Mr. Clinton has flourished by blaming his, and denying that he has anything to be forgiven for.

The 78-year-old President built a country because, under the sternest possible provocations, he kept the faith and never got bitter. The baby-boomer President has elevated slipping, sliding, whining and bitterness to a management style.

At the news conference that Mr. Clinton wanted more than Mr. Mandela, the American leader, beset by tabloid reports of another grope peddling her story, tried to bask in the reflected glow of the South African's saintliness.

But morality can be a vexing matter.

Mr. Mandela used his moral authority to defend his friendships with leaders that America sees as terrorist-nurturing thugs.

Mr. Clinton came to Africa saying he wanted strong partners. In Mr. Mandela, he got one, and then some. The South African lectured the American on loyalty.

Now you would think the notoriously disloyal Mr. Clinton could use a good lecture on loyalty from a Nobel prize-winning pillar of rectitude.

But it turned out that loyalty can be a vexing matter, too. Why should we have a finger wagged at us over Libya, Cuba and Iran? "One of the first heads of state I invited to this country was Fidel Castro," Mr. Mandela said at their news conference. "I have received in this country ex-President Rafsanjani of Iran. I have also invited the leader Qaddafi to this country. I do that because our moral authority dictates that we should not abandon those who helped us in the darkest hour of the history of this country. ... Those

The serial President.

South Africans who have berated me for being loyal to our friends — literally, they can go and throw themselves in a pool."

Mr. Mandela gave the American a paternal pat on the head, saying that Bill and Hillary Clinton may have made mistakes but have "the correct instincts on the major international questions."

But then he proceeded to instruct Mr. Clinton about changing some of those instincts, advising him to forgive America's enemies. "I have no doubt that the role of the United States as the world leader will be tremendously enhanced," Mr. Mandela said. But forgiveness can be a vexing matter.

As Samuel Berger, the national security adviser, pointed out afterward, it is difficult to forgive absent justice.

In their private meeting, Mr. Clinton told Mr. Mandela that the United States could not entertain any thoughts of forgiving Libya until Qaddafi turned over the two suspects in the terrorist bombing of Pan Am 103 to Britain for trial.

Turning the other cheek may be well and good, but as Mr. Berger noted, the families of the people who were blown out of the sky in Lockerbie, Scotland, want some answers.

"For Mandela, it's a loyalty issue," Mr. Berger said. "It's an issue of principle for us and that principle is justice for those families and deterring terrorism."

But this is not his loyalty versus our principle. It is a matter of principle on both sides.

Principle, after all, can be a vexing matter. □

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Orrin G. Hatch, a Republican from Utah, is chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Miles Davis's Mid-60's Quintet Still Reverberates

By PETER WATROUS

MILES DAVIS'S second great quintet — Wayne Shorter on saxophone, Herbie Hancock on piano, Ron Carter on bass and Tony Williams on drums — left behind four of the more perfect albums in acoustic jazz history.

The records — "Miles Smiles," "E.S.P.," "Sorcerer" and "Nefertiti" — brought jazz to an extraordinary level of interaction, changing the parameters for group improvisation. Then in 1967, everything changed: Davis and the group started playing with electric instruments and pop textures, and the albums receded into history, albeit beautiful history.

At the time, the achievements of these four albums were overshadowed by music that was more extreme. The music of John Coltrane and Ornette Coleman and even Davis's own subsequent electric music grabbed more attention.

There was little indication that the four quintet albums would become some of the most influential recordings in jazz. But they are now acknowledged as masterpieces, the paradigm for the great jazz revolution of the 1960's led by the Miles Davis Quintet. And for completely different reasons, they have become extremely influential with young jazz musicians in the 90's as well.

The albums have just been repackaged and reissued by Columbia Records as the six-CD boxed set "Miles Davis Quintet, 1965-68." The set is the third installment in a series devoted to the music of Davis (who died in 1991), with at least seven planned. Future boxes, for example, include a three-CD set given over to a single album, "In Silent Way." The series is one of the most ambitious reissue programs in jazz.

THE quintet albums became templates in the 60's in part because Columbia shrewdly kept them in print, just in time for the CD explosion and the growing interest in all things American, including jazz.

But more important was the music itself. Heavy with the moody and introspective atmosphere of the group's main composer, Mr. Shorter, it was ideal for students who were interested in learning the complex-

ities of harmony and form. And unlike more expressionistic groups in the 1960's, the quintet manipulated rhythm and time with a sense of swing.

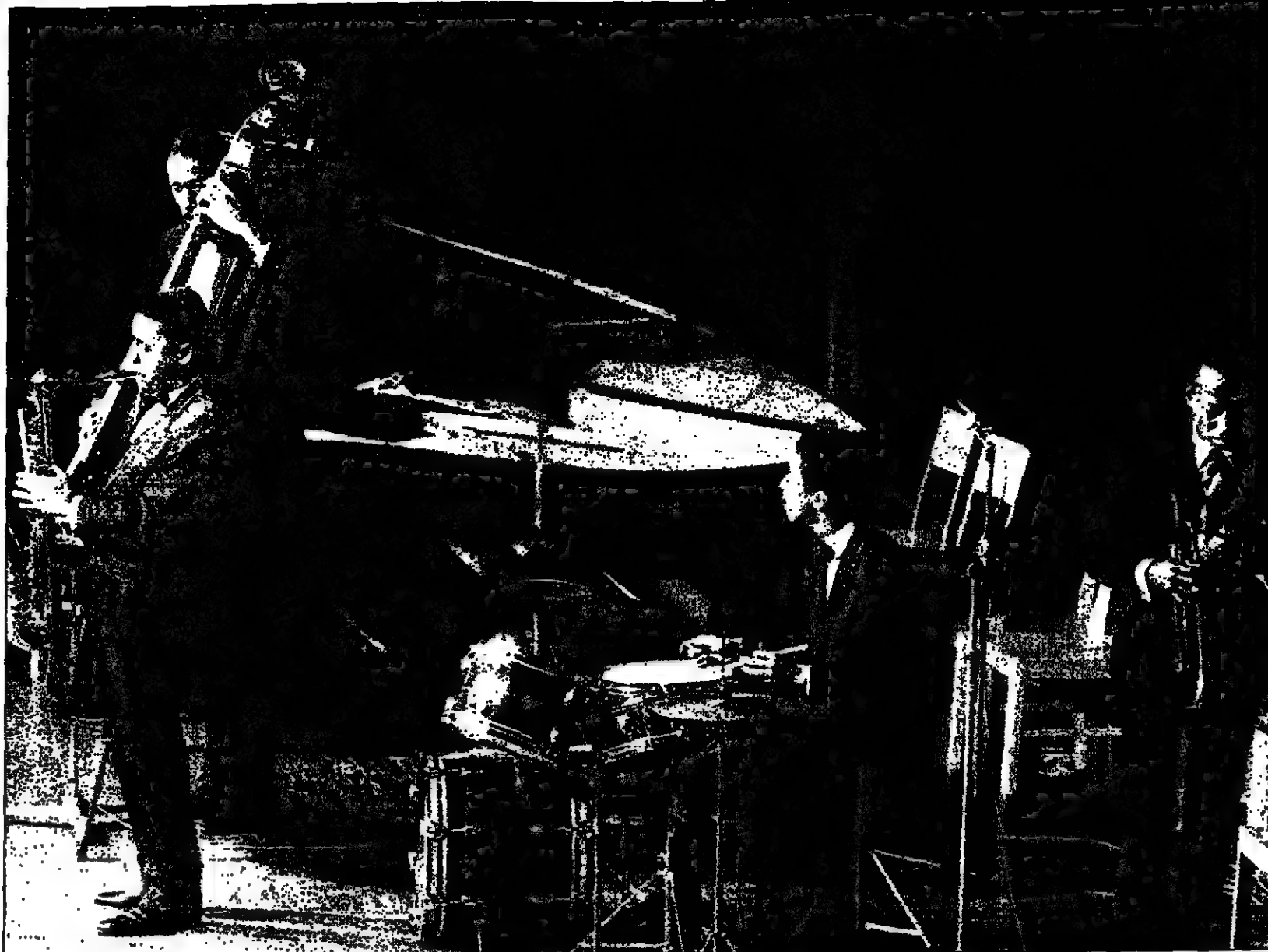
By the time the 1990's rolled around, students were hearing something else in the music beyond its compositional structures. They were enthralled by the band's fluid collective improvisations, in particular the way the rhythm section worked.

Much of that percussive sound was generated by the drumming of Tony Williams (who died in 1997). All over these recordings, Williams instigated interaction at a level that had not previously existed in jazz.

On the first track the band ever recorded, "E.S.P.," from 1965, Williams's ride cymbal doubles the time of the melody and drives the band so ferociously that Davis has no chance to relax during his solo. Williams provides a context for the soloists, orchestrating the background by concentrating on one texture at a time from his kit, changing the weight of his tumult. Tempo, the drummer Max Roach once remarked, takes care of itself, and a good musician always carries it around in his head, without the need to mark off time. And Williams plays that way, willing to slow down tempo or speed them up, slowly or abruptly. His inventions are an act of bravery, and the glory of the music comes from the group's ability to move along with Williams. He hears everything, and his responses are an ongoing criticism to the action that surrounds him.

THAT interactive brilliance is found to a greater degree on the first installment in the series of boxed sets, "Live at the Plugged Nickel," from 1965. During that extraordinarily fertile period, Davis, instead of performing the new compositions from the quintet albums, kept playing his standard repertoire. Mr. Carter has said that the group was able to reach such a high level of interaction because of the musicians' familiarity with those compositions. Constant playing of the same few tunes drove the musicians to improvise profoundly.

By the time the band got to the last of its acoustic recordings, "Riot," in July 1967, it had become a radically looser group than before. Williams is even more abrupt in his playing and



The Miles Davis Quintet (Wayne Shorter, saxophone, Ron Carter, bass, Tony Williams, drums, Herbie Hancock, piano, and Davis, trumpet), performing during the mid 1960's. Through four classic albums, the band changed the parameters of group improvisation in jazz.

more willing to perform duets with the soloists, leaving the keeping of time to the bassist. Then the electric music began, and the group, now expanded beyond a quintet, created music that was static, riff based and utterly gorgeous.

Though played by essentially the same musicians, it is also completely distinct from the acoustic music that preceded it, and the inclusion of this electric material in this boxed set

makes no historical sense. Instead, the producers have decided that the esthetic split that occurs in Davis's music comes with the substitution in 1968 of Chick Corea and Dave Holland for Mr. Hancock and Mr. Carter.

Unfortunately, the personnel change comes in the middle of the album "Filles de Kilimanjaro"; incredibly the producers have only included half the album on the boxed

set. Add that strangely surgical decision to the newly chronological ordering of the material — instead of the careful, sensitive arrangement of the original albums — and one has the triumph of collectors over listeners.

Davis, by adding electric instrumentation and turning to pop, began a rupture in his music and in jazz; fans and critics continue to argue about it.

Young musicians in the 1980's took up where Davis left off, reworking the music for their purposes. Those in the 1990's have taken up a different set of innovations offered by the recordings and are reworking the music for another set of aesthetics. One test of greatness is whether succeeding generations pay attention to a work of art. In this case, a lot of people are paying attention, for a lot of different reasons. □

Challenging Irish Demons

By ALAN RIDING

THE Irish are such obsessive conversationalists that if they were not funny, they would probably be at one another's throats. On second thought, of course, they have been at one another's throats a fair bit, but they have still retained their sense of humor. Unsurprisingly, given the successive traumas of Irish history, it is a dark sense of humor. But it has also proved immensely useful: in the pub and in literature, it has permitted the Irish both to mock and to celebrate their Irishness. Now, in Neil Jordan's new film, "The Butcher Boy," which opens on Friday, humor has become the ultimate instrument of survival.

"I think the trick is that you can get away with anything in Ireland if you're funny," said Patrick McCabe, who wrote the acclaimed novel of the same name that Mr. Jordan adapted for the screen. "If you hit people over the head with a stick, they get fed up. But if you're witty, you'll be O.K."

Not that humor has been absent from other recent Irish movies, but it has usually been used to lighten political dramas, as in Mr. Jordan's last film, "Michael Collins," about the hero of Irish independence. In contrast, "The Butcher Boy" looks at Ireland microscopically through the distorted prism of a 12-year-old boy, Francis Brady, growing up in a small town in the early 1960's. Francis's life is a mess. He is also very funny. And like many of the Irish, he likes to tell his own story.

"It's a very dark film," Mr. Jordan conceded. "But what I reinforced was the insane incurable optimism of the central character. The more he makes you laugh, the more deeply you feel his tragedy, and that's because the more you like him. So this thing of laughter and savagery, laughter and savagery almost became the rhythm of the movie. When I finished reading the book, I was extraordinarily exhilarated. And I wanted to create the same feeling when the film is over."

At first glance, of course, the story of Francis, played by Eamonn Owens, is anything but uplifting. His father, Benny (Stephen Rea), is a drunk, while Ma Brady (Aisling O'Sullivan) is sliding toward madness. But Francis and his best friend, Joe (Alan Boyle), live in their own fantasy world fed by comic books, television films and news broadcasts about the Cuban missile crisis, a world in which Francis walks tall, indifferent to gossip about his dysfunctional family. Indifferent, that is, until his pompous neighbor, Mrs. Nu-



Director Neil Jordan.

gent (Fiona Shaw), pronounces Benny Brady "no better than a pig." And with that, in the name of the Pig Family, Francis declares war on Mrs. Nugent and her geeky son, Philip (Andrew Fullerton).

His first reprisal is to climb into Mrs. Nugent's home and write "Philip Is a Pig" in lipstick on a wall, a gesture that promptly earns him a stint in a reform school run by Roman Catholic priests. There he finds solace in visions of a sensual-looking Virgin Mary (Sinead O'Connor) and earns privileges by dressing up in girls' clothes to please one of the fathers. When he is finally released, his mother has died, Joe has gone off to boarding school — with Philip Nugent no less — and Francis is forced to work in a slaughterhouse. He tries to remain upbeat, but then his father dies and he is alone. Blaming Mrs. Nugent for his troubles, Francis retreats further into his fantasy world until the logic of one final act of revenge against his nemesis seems irrefutable.

So is this Ireland? "It is totally autobiographical in its mood," said Mr. McCabe, 43, who set his story in Clones in County Monaghan, near the border with Northern Ireland, where he was born and lived until he was 17 and where most of the film was shot. "The actual incidents are, of course, not autobiographical at all."

To Mr. Jordan, though, it was the book's mood that struck a familiar chord. Although five years older than Mr. McCabe and reared in a middle-class, book-friendly home in Dublin, Mr. Jordan remembers the Ireland of the early 1960's as poor, introspective, dominated by the Catholic Church and still scarred by centuries of British rule. Even in the early 1970's, when Mr. Jordan joined other young Irish working as a laborer in London, "we carried around a sense of inferiority almost like an overcoat," he said. Today, in a land that is increasingly prosperous and self-

confident, that Ireland is hard to discern.

"Francis's story could not happen now," said Mr. Jordan, a stocky, dark-haired man, said over lunch in a restaurant in Dublin's Temple Bar district, the heart of the country's bustling arts world. "It's definitely a portrait of things as they were in the 1960's. For one thing, there are few priests in schools nowadays. There's huge consciousness of the level of abuse that went on. A kid could not be ignored like that. There are child-care services now. But 'The Butcher Boy' is a very good account of how things actually were."

IN that sense, then, the movie does fit into Irish cinema's attempt to probe aspects of Irish history and society that until recently no one dared to address because, in Mr. Jordan's words, "discussion of them was so politically loaded."

This was certainly the case with the film about Michael Collins, who became a hero for fighting the British and was then murdered in the civil war that followed Irish Home Rule in 1922. In "The Butcher Boy," the Ireland of 35 years ago looks no more appealing, a reminder to today's youth of how bleak things were not so long ago.

What gives the book and the movie a certain universality, though, is that they penetrate the mind of a boy floating dangerously between imagination and reality. The imagination and reality may be rooted in Clones in the early 1960's, but a boy could be equally unbalanced by a mixture of pain and dreams anywhere in the world. It is his humor that is so distinctly Irish.

After his arrest, Francis asks if he will be hanged. "I'm sorry, Francis, but there's no more hanging," a policeman replies. "Sergeant! What's this country coming to?" Francis asks indignantly.

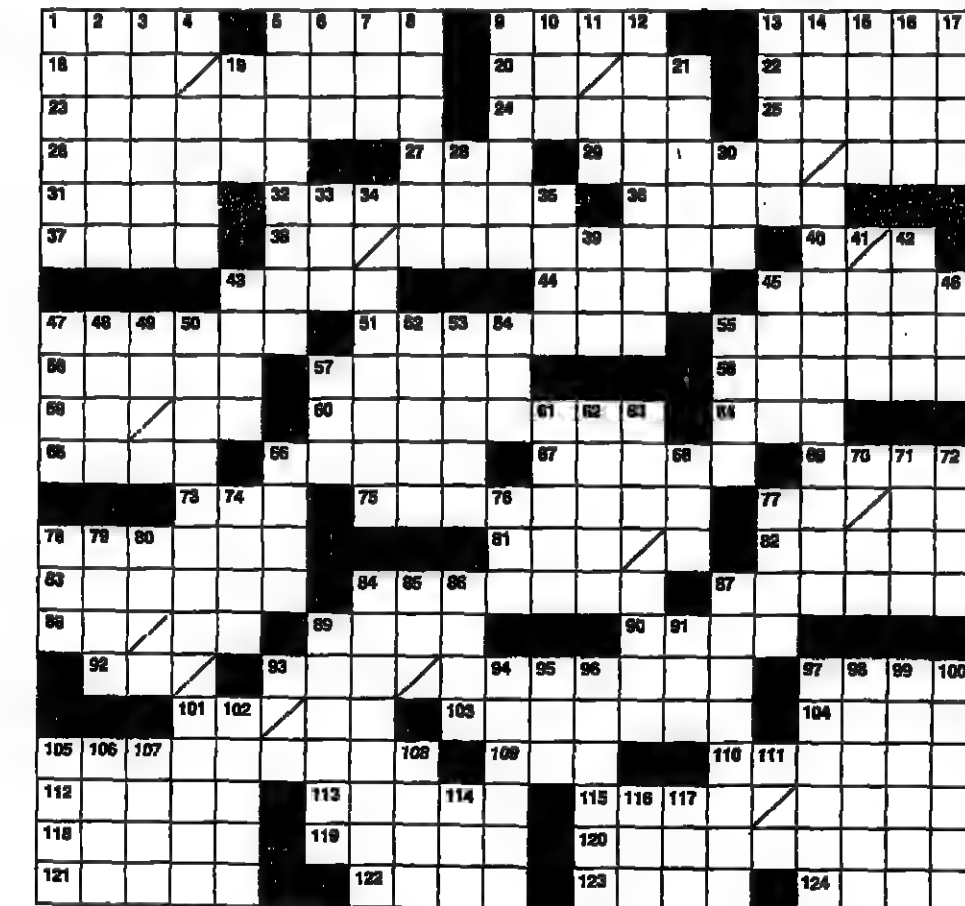
Mr. Jordan said he found it something of a relief not to be dealing head on with the perennial issues of Irish identity, with "the cross between politics and poetry," as he put it. Mr. McCabe in turn said he was only interested in recreating an imaginary world, not in denouncing the Catholic Church.

"There's nothing more tedious than Irish novelists banging on about the oppression of Catholicism," he said in a telephone interview from his home in Sligo. "I found Catholicism quite imaginative and a rich kind of inheritance, particularly in that period. I always found it a kind of vast and exotic mine to chip away at and use in terms of imagery." □

TWO BY THIRTEEN

By ROBERT H. WOLFE / Edited by WILL SHORTZ

ACROSS
1 Rikki-Tikki—
5 1990's group
Salt-N
9 Headpiece?
13 Off
18 February 1991
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20 Jordanian tongue
22 Like an ami to une
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23 — Foundation
(leading
philanthropic
organization)
24 Mrs. Yeltsin
25 Join for a ride
26 60's-70's German
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69 "Oh, sure!"
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92 Communism battler,
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93 Not a job for a
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103 "She-Goat" artist
104 Home of Wheeler
Air Force Base
105 Certain hammers



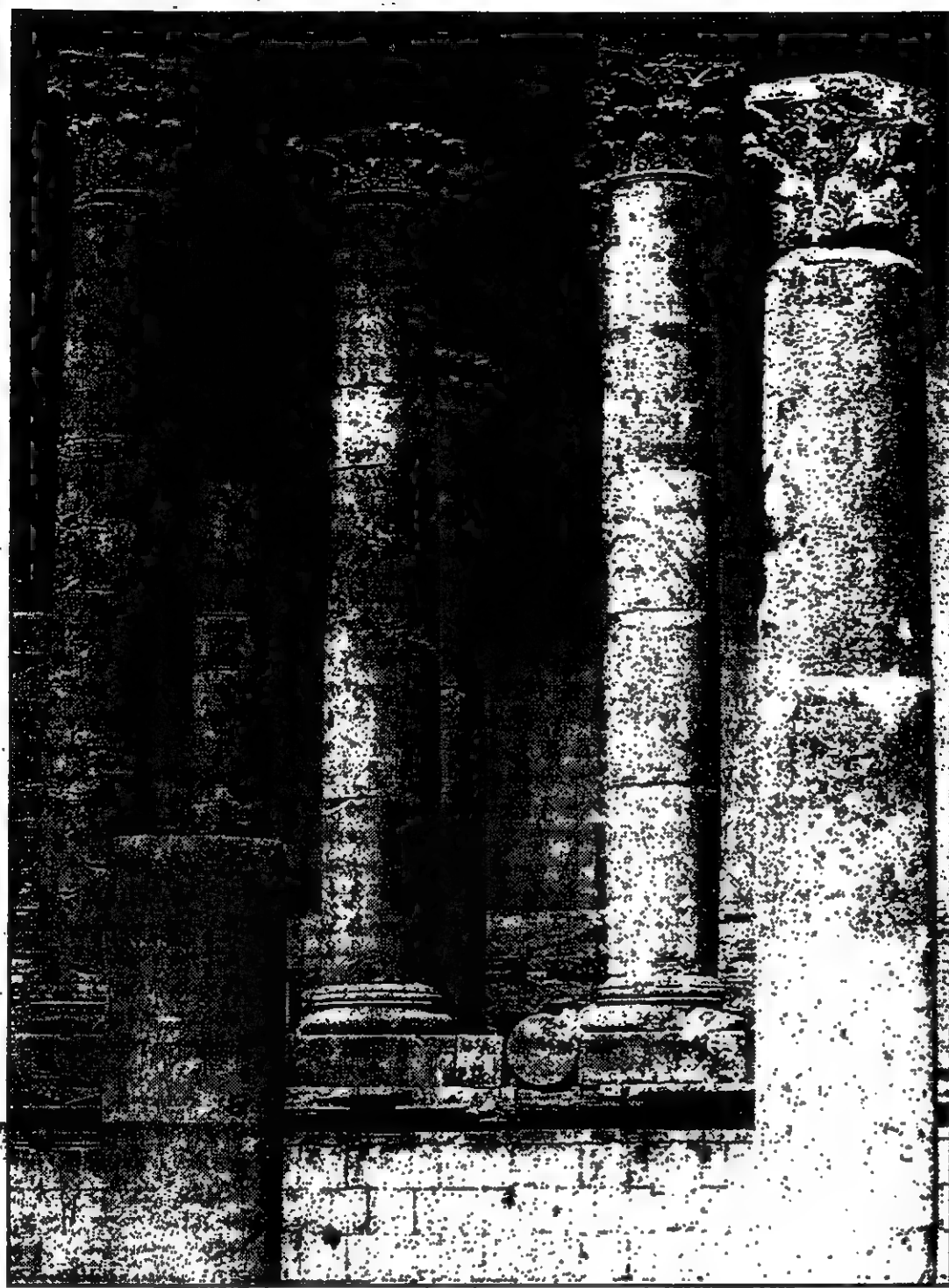
109 Ratio symbols
110 Decreaser?
112 Name after a name
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115 Buzzers
118 Polo man?
119 Reagan adviser
120 Add up
121 Relevant
122 Fictional pirate
123 Squeezed (out)
124 Epitome of thinness
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Jerash and the Jews

When the Jews rose up against Roman rule in Palestine in 70 CE, local populations either attacked or subdued the Jews in their midst. Jerash was unique in protecting its Jews – which may have led the Roman emperor Vespasian to sack the city. **Rami G. Khouri** writes about a new theory that could be the key to the city's past



Graceful columns reach up, unimpeded, to the sky: An intriguing new theory could shed light on the city's earliest years.

Jerash's mysteries have challenged scholars for over a century.

Why was the massive Temple of Artemis complex never completed? Why did the Greco-Roman city have two major temples, for Zeus and Artemis?

Why was the Oval Plaza – often incorrectly referred to as the forum – constructed in the shape of a skewed oval? Why were the city and its walls never extended south to link up with Hadrian's Arch?

After more than a decade of excavations, French archaeologist and architect Jacques Seigne has come up with a hypothesis that may explain some of these mysteries – while shedding light on vital phases of the city's earliest years.

One of the most important questions Seigne has tried to answer is about the earliest phases of the Hellenistic settlement or town.

The founding of Gerasa (Jerash's Roman name) by Hellenistic forces in the late 4th century BCE is well documented; but there has been no architectural evidence of structures from the 4th or 3rd centuries BCE.

Seigne believes this is because the modern region of north Jordan was then part of an unstable frontier zone, constantly fought over by the two major local remnants of Alexander the Great's Hellenistic forces – the Ptolemies based in Egypt and the Seleucids in Syria.

There may have been a small Hellenistic garrison at Jerash, but no greater Hellenistic presence that would have left behind architectural remains. The indigenous, non-Hellenized local population at the site occupied a small village or town on the hill that now houses the archaeological museum across the Oval Plaza from the Temple of Zeus.

The local Semitic population called their settlement "Garsu." When the Seleucids, under King Antiochus IV, achieved political and military dominance of this region in the 2nd century BCE, conditions were ripe for economic expansion and urban growth – hence the founding of the city of Jerash.

THE NEXT major change in the city's fortunes appears to have taken place around 70 CE, which corresponds with the main political development in the region at that time – the first Jewish revolt against Roman rule.

A historical text by Flavius Josephus mentions that during the political and military battles between the ruling Romans and the local Jewish population, Jerash did not react to the Jewish revolt in the same way as other cities.

In most of the cities of the region, local populations are reported to have sided with the Roman emperor and attacked or subdued their native Jewish populations. But at Jerash, we are told by Josephus, the local population protected the Jews.

The Roman emperor Vespasian may have interpreted the actions of the Jerash population as an anti-Roman stand, and ordered his forces to sack the city. The supreme act of retribution against the people of Jerash would have been the destruction of their temple, a firm and harsh demonstration of who was in political control.

Excavation evidence reveals burning and destruction levels from this time, and two inscriptions from Jerash note that local people financed the rebuilding of the Zeus sanctuary around 69/70 CE. This is backed up by the excavations, which reveal a rebuilding of the temple complex at this time – but on a different axis than the Hellenistic temple, in order to align the temple with the terrace/courtyard.

This new temple, with walls built of alternating white and pink limestone, has no known parallel anywhere in this region. Completely surrounding the earli-

er sacred facilities, it acted like an "envelope" enclosing them.

The end of the 1st/early 2nd century CE saw the next major urban project – the construction of the main colonnaded street of the city, the Cardo, linking the north gate of the city with the Zeus

temple complex occupying the central point in the city. In the period 130/150 CE, though, the Zeus Temple complex was again destroyed and rebuilt as a smaller sanctuary, and suddenly the large Temple of Artemis complex was built on a higher hill inside the city walls.

All major new buildings as of that moment cluster around the Artemis complex, and Hadrian's Arch is left standing alone south of and well outside the city walls. What happened to prompt this sudden change in the town plan?

Seigne's hypothesis suggests that perhaps during the second Jewish revolt Jerash experienced a repeat of the circumstances of the first Jewish revolt.

If the Jerash population again sided with its Jewish population against the Roman emperor, it is

Did Jerash's population side with the Jews again during the second Jewish revolt – with equally drastic results for the city?

Temple complex at its southern end.

The North Gate went up in 115 CE – and the peculiar shape of the Oval Plaza? That reflected the need to align the Cardo's layout with the entrance to the temple, at that time the city's only one.

The next phase of the city's growth coincided with two other important regional political developments: the visit of the Roman Emperor Hadrian in 129/130 CE, and the second Jewish revolt in 130-135 CE.

The South Gate was built to wel-

come Hadrian to the city, and it was Hadrian who prompted the city's leaders to expand the city to the south. They then erected Hadrian's Arch 400 metres to the south, and drew up plans to expand the city southwards – an urban expansion that would have

possible that the emperor destroyed the Zeus Temple complex in order to show his anger with the people of Jerash. Then he may have backed a different faction of people in the city whose symbol of political power was the new Artemis Temple.

Perhaps the new power elite in Jerash comprised remnants or descendants of the former local Semitic population who had been marginalized in the previous century by the Hellenistic population that had built the Zeus complex as its own symbol of political control?

According to this theory, it was more practical to build an entirely new Artemis Temple complex in its present location because it would have been too costly to remove the Zeus complex and replace it with the Artemis complex on the same spot.

The new Artemis complex thus became simultaneously the new symbol of political control at Jerash, as well as the new focal point for town planning. The southern expansion of the city towards Hadrian's Arch was abandoned, and expansion of the city as of around 150 CE occurred on an axis that revolved around the Temple of Artemis.

ARTEMIS became the official deity of the city – a profoundly political act that humiliated those Jerash citizens who had made the mistake of backing the Jewish revolt against the emperor.

This might explain why, as of the mid-2nd century CE, the eastern quarter of the city was built up, following the construction of the first bridge across the river – a bridge that linked the eastern city (the current modern city) with the approach to the Temple of Artemis.

In the second half of the 2nd century CE, consequently, Jerash witnessed the construction of its two main colonnaded streets (the North and South Decumani) that crossed the Cardo in an east-west direction, the east baths, the North Theatre and other monuments that related to the Artemis complex rather than to the Zeus complex.

This theory suggests that Greco-Roman urban planning at Jerash only started with the construction of the Artemis Temple complex, for in the previous Hellenistic period the town only witnessed the expansion of the Zeus complex, without a fully-fledged urban town plan to go along with it.

The expansion of the city as of the second half of the 2nd century CE is well attested in the archaeological excavations that have been conducted in the last several decades. Those excavations also show another change in the city's architectural history later that century. About one generation after the second Jewish revolt, work suddenly stopped on the Artemis complex, which was never completed, and the Zeus Temple complex was rebuilt in its existing form, with a new hilltop temple even bigger than the Artemis Temple.

The Temple of Zeus appears to have been deliberately built slightly larger than the Artemis temple; its facade is 2.4 metres wider than Artemis, and it had eight rather than six columns in its facade. It was also completely finished and used, as opposed to the unfinished Artemis Temple.

What might explain these facts? Again, political/economic factors may be the reason. Seigne hypothesizes that with the declining ability of the Roman emperors to continue supporting and financing the construction works of their local allies, the faction in Jerash whose previous political power had been represented by the Zeus Temple complex – probably the wealthy merchants – once again enjoyed political ascendancy at Jerash. They forced the political powers of the city to abandon work on Artemis, and rebuilt Zeus as the biggest religious/political focal point of the city.

This is purely a hypothesis constructed mainly on the strength of the evidence of the architectural story revealed by the excavations. No available literary evidence supports this theory; but there is a nearby parallel that may be explained by similar circumstances – in Amman.

Perhaps, Seigne suggests, we can explain the presence of the remains of two Roman temples on the Amman Citadel by the same regional and local political factors that may have resulted in the construction of two large temples at Jerash.

The tale of Moby Dicky

Of all the dolphin joints in the world, Dicky was lucky to end up in this one.

Dolphin Reef in Eilat is rare among menageries in that animal-rights activists can't think of a bad word to say about it. (The exception would be hardi animal-rights activists, who might object to the topless sunbathers on its beach.) If pressed, they might even be prepared to commend Dolphin Reef for an act of extraordinary humanitarianism – the unusual story of Dicky.

Dicky wasn't doing anyone much good swimming around in a part of the Black Sea where there aren't any tourists.

phins in the world, each with its own dialect," explains Hamutal. "Because Dicky came from the Black Sea, he couldn't communicate with dolphins from the Red Sea."

And there is as yet no dolphin ulpan in the area. The reef had options: It could have said the hell with it, Dicky is otherwise happy here, and tourists are spending lots of money to watch him jump around; it could have imposed a human compromise on the family structure and revoked one of the females from bigamist Cindy; it could have washed its hands of him and sold him for \$100,000.

Not Page One



Sam Orbaum

There are 80 kinds of dolphins in the world, each with its own dialect. Because Dicky came from the Black Sea, he couldn't communicate with dolphins from the Red Sea

There were tourists in Eilat, but no dolphins. The solution was obvious.

Dicky didn't seem to mind relocating from the Black to the Red Sea. He was happy, his trainers say. He enjoyed performing, was well fed and even free to leave the confines of the Reef.

Could a dolphin ask for more? But there was something missing. A Mrs. Dicky.

Hamutal Shilo, one of the humans at Dolphin Reef, relates the tale: "When we opened in 1990, we brought five dolphins from the Black Sea – two males and three females. The problem is, a typical dolphin family is one male, a coterie of females and their babies."

Cindy, the dominant male, was 18; Dicky was five. At the time it was copacetic: Dicky was accepted. Eventually, though, when he reached the age of 10, he wanted a piece of the action.

"Cindy didn't let him get close to the females, and he couldn't incorporate with the family. Dolphins need a social life because they're very sociable, which is why you always see them in large groups. If you see a solitary dolphin, it means something horrible happened to him."

The Reef's Maya Zilber, another fully grown female human, relates that Dicky settled for the next-best alternative: people. But ... there was a problem.

"Dicky would expose his sex organ and rub up against swimmers and divers. Well. Something had to be done."

The reef opened the enclosure and gave Dicky the run of the Red Sea. It had been planning to give all the dolphins free access eventually – confident that they would always come back home – but Dicky's urges hastened the plan.

It was hoped that Dicky would meet a nice girl out there and bring her home to roost, but it turns out the local babes just weren't interested in a Russian immigrant. "There are 80 kinds of dol-

Who would know? Who would care?

But there was another option: return Dicky home.

And that's what they did. "Instead of selling him for \$100,000 to some circus, Ronny Zilber, the owner of Dolphin Reef, spent that much to do what he thought was right," says Hamutal, obviously proud of her employer. "I believe this operation was unique."

It was an emotionally charged decision because Dicky and the staff loved each other.

"We lifted him out of the water, placed him in a specially made rubber tub, and put him into a truck. Everybody was crying; it was so sad for all of us. The truck drove to the airport, to a plane hired by Mr. Zilber."

Zilber and Cissy, a trainer who had a special relationship with Dicky, accompanied him home, stroking and talking to him along the way.

Dicky was brought back to the same spot where he had been captured six years earlier, at Taman Bay. But the operation was not yet finished.

Academics of the Severtsov Institute, which specializes in the field of marine mammals, took over. Severtsov originally transferred the dolphins to Israel as part of scientific cooperation agreements signed during a visit to newly democratized Russia by then-science minister Ezer Weizman.

Continues Hamutal: "Severtsov put Dicky together with a female, Blanca. Happily, there was good interaction. After a while together in a specially built aquarium, they were released into the sea, their fins marked with male and female signs."

"From time to time we get messages from boats in the Black Sea that they've seen the marked fins. The last message we got was in November," Hamutal smiles warmly, maternally. "Now we're just waiting to hear about a sighting – with babies."

Dicky will have quite a story to tell his grandchildren.

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PASSPORT

1997 VOLKSWAGEN POLO, like new, 5 door, 5 speed, a/c, double air bags, ABS, red. Tel. 053-828-177, [790619]

CITROEN SAXO 1.4i, 1997, first hand, white, 4 doors, 18,000 km., immobilizer + alarm, CD, double air bag, electric windows, power steering. Tel. 03-522-8917, [791957]

UNRESTRICTED

MITSUBISHI GALANT 1996, automatic, power steering, immobilizer, white, bargain price 80,000 shekels as receiving new car next month. Arthur office Tel. 03-517-6248, Home 09-957-5656, Car Tel. 052-866-793.

MITSUBISHI SUPER LANCER, 1996, automatic, power-steering, bargain, 82,000 NIS, or only 59,000 NIS with April delivery. Tel. Danny (office) 03-517-6248 evenings or weekend (home) 08-928-4482, [791837]

VOLKSWAGEN GOLF, 1995, 1.8, AC, 5 doors, dual air bags, alarm system, power steering, immobilizer, white, bargain price 80,000 shekels as receiving new car next month. Arthur office Tel. 09-950-5717 (home), Tel. 09-956-7086 (work), [790654]

VEHICLES

Jerusalem

PASSPORT

NISSAN ALTIMA, 1994, first hand, 40,000 km., blue, 4 doors, automatic, power steering & door locks, electric windows, immobilizer, dual air bags, ABS, a/c, min. \$10,500. Tel. 02-561-0588, [791935]

HUNDAI ACCENT 1996, very good deal, 1st hand, automatic, additions, with options, 10,000 km., excellent condition. Tel. 02-566-1763, 050-830-912, [790614]

VEHICLES

General

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SEAT IBIZA 1.6 L, first owner, 30,000 km., dual airbags, power steering, air-conditioning, central locking, alarm, radio-tape, possible passport to passport. Tel. 02-579-1325, [790622]

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VEHICLES

Jerusalem

UNRESTRICTED

MITSUBISHI L300 GLX, 1988, 8 passenger, front & rear air conditioner, manual transmission, yearly test, very attractive, brand new engine (including receipt), \$3,400. Tel. 02-983-1530, 050-316-715 (NS), [15164]

SUBARU STATION, 1988, 1.8 cc., American model, power steering, brakes, a/c, radio-tape, 87,000 km. With service book, 1st owner, one of a kind. Tel. 02-653-1483, 050-316-715 (NS), [15477]

HYUNDAI H-100 MINI BUS, 1995, 10 passengers, front/rear, a/c, 68,000 km., manual, p.a., radio-tape, alarm, 2.4 cc engine, runs & looks perfect. NIS 39,500 (NIS 11,500 under book). Tel. 02-993-1580, 050-316-715 (NS), [15477]

1994 VOLVO 940 GL Saloon for sale, great condition, only 37,000 km., full dealer service record. Phone Derek or Julie, Tel. 02-533-0345.

MAZDA 823, 1995, GLX, automatic, year test, 1st hand, all additions, alarm, radio-tape, well-cared, 43,000 km., flat price. Tel. 050-343-821, 02-534-3373, [12719]

MAZDA MPV, 1996, first hand, from private, excellent, like new, comfortable and safe, 8 passengers, all alarm and protection systems, includes low mileage. Tel. 02-642-8003, 050-406-349, [16068]

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Monday,
March 30, 1998

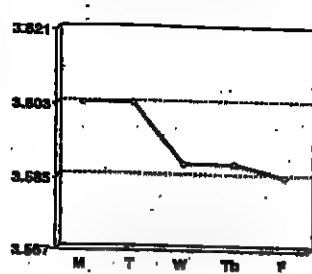
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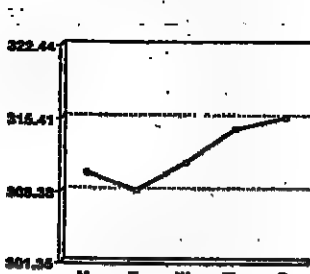
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in brief

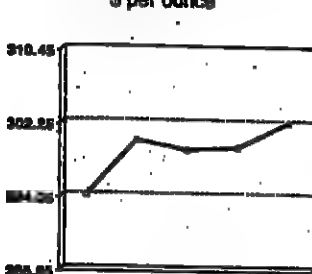
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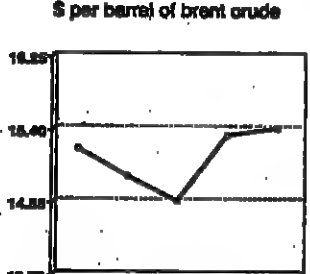
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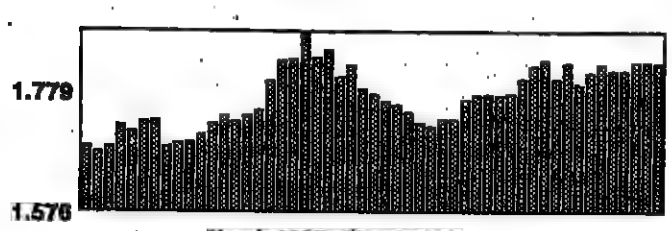
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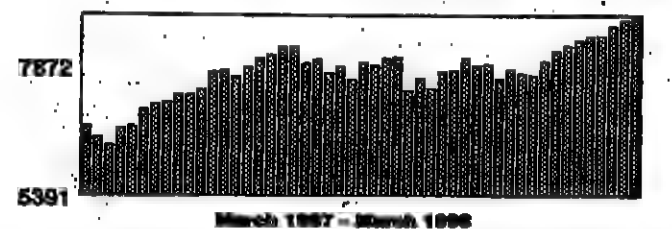
OIL



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DOW JONES INDUST. AVG.



Indian industrialists arrive

A delegation of senior officials from an Indian industrialist confederation arrives today as guests of the Israel Manufacturers Association. The organizations signed a cooperation agreement five years ago. The visitors will meet with Chief Scientist Omer Berry, Rina Fridor, who is in charge of the technological incubator program in the Industry and Trade Ministry, and the Israel Export Institute.

Nina Gilbert

Electra Consumer sets up plant in India

By NINA GILBERT

Electra Consumer Products, the Rishon LeZion-based maker of consumer appliances and air-conditioners, is establishing a plant in India at an investment of \$6 million.

The plant, to be located near Bombay, is expected to be ready for production next year and to employ 300 local workers. The plant will be managed by Israelis who will be stationed in India.

In the first phase, the plant will make window units for the Indian market and for export to Europe. CEO Eliezer Ben-Moshe said the air-conditioning market in India is starting to develop and is growing at an annual rate of 25 percent.

Ben-Moshe said Electra also decided to launch operations in India due to its cheap labor costs and a need to counterbalance the seasonal nature of the air-conditioning market in the company's two main markets - Israel and Europe.

Sharansky to US for trade talks

By NINA GILBERT

Industry and Trade Minister Natan Sharansky left for the US last night for trade talks and to seek opportunities for industrial cooperation and investments in Israeli companies.

During the four-day visit, Sharansky is to meet with some 50 representatives of top venture capital funds and investment banks and will hold meetings in New York, Boston, and Washington.

In Washington, Sharansky is to hold bilateral trade discussions with US Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky. Zohar Perl,

head of the ministry's Foreign Trade Administration, is joining Sharansky on the visit.

In Boston, Sharansky will meet with Massachusetts Gov. Paul Cellucci.

Sharansky will also be meeting with top American news media to give them an economic and diplo-

matic briefing.

As part of the Center for Investment Promotion's aim of attracting large US companies with potential for presence in Israel, Sharansky is to meet with the GTE telecommunications corporation, General Electric, and Pratt & Whitney.

Analysts, following 22% drop in profit

Koor's reduced net due to slowdown

By DAN GERSTENFELD

Koor Industries has reported that net profit fell 22 percent last year to \$138 million from \$177.9m. in 1996, with analysts saying the decline reflects slowing economic activity.

Sales rose slightly to \$3.56 billion from \$3.47b. a year earlier. The country's largest conglomerate said that net income for the fourth quarter fell nearly two-thirds to \$8.4m. from NIS \$24.2m. during the same period a year ear-

lier. Koor's revenues rose slightly to \$844.1m. from \$828.1m. at the same period in 1996.

The report came only one day after Cial Israel, the country's second largest holding company, reported that net profit tumbled 91% in 1997 to NIS 10.7 m. from NIS 119.4m. a year earlier.

Analysts said the decline in profitability of Israel's two largest conglomerates reflects the slowing economy. "The results came as no surprise," said Doron Tzur, head of research at Sahar

Securities. "When the economy slows the big local companies are the first to get hurt."

In a statement, Koor attributed the decline to "higher taxes and an increase in minority holdings of its operations."

The company said that exports increased 20.7% to \$1.49b. from \$1.24b. in 1996.

Koor said that its largest increase in international revenues and operating income came from the Makhsheshim and Agan agrochemicals subsidiaries, which

have become the world's leading producers of generic plant protection products.

At the same time, building and infrastructure materials activities were largely responsible for the decline in profits, reflecting the stagnant domestic economy.

Koor's president and CEO, Benjamin Gaon, said that the international activities account for nearly 42% of sales and the figures is expected to grow.

"We are now targeting to reach nearly 60% by 2001 and we do

believe that the acceptance of our high-technology-oriented products in global markets may enable Koor to reach that goal even sooner," Gaon said.

Several months ago, Koor adopted a strategic plan aimed at focusing on the company's core business, primarily the export-oriented telecommunications, electronics and agrochemicals subsidiaries.

The plan includes also divesting part of Koor's holdings in other companies.

Integrated index falls 0.1% in Feb.

By DAVID HARRIS

The Bank of Israel index of integrated economic indicators fell 0.1 percent last month, according to figures published yesterday.

The 0.1% decline followed no change in January and a 0.1% decline in December. The January figure was corrected from an initial +0.5% and that for December from a positive 0.1. The data are indicative of the static economy, the central bank said.

The February index comprised a 1.5% increase in retail sales, compared to 2% in January, a 0.2% decline in the imports index, after a 10.2% fall, and the industrial production index was down 1.6%, after a 0.6% drop in January.

Meanwhile, Finance Minister Yaakov Neeman reportedly told yesterday's cabinet meeting that given the likely lower-than-expected 1998 inflation, ministries will have to meet any unexpected price rises from their own reserves.

The Treasury is now predicting annual inflation will be 6% or less.

As a result, State Budget Director David Milgrom issued a statement that individual ministry reserves will have to cover estimated real terms price rises of 2%. This, he said, is a mere technicality and is a cautionary measure. Milgrom also agreed that lower inflation may lead to a shortfall in predicted state revenues, and expenditure will have to be adjusted in line with any changes.

S&P cuts Japanese banks' credit ratings

The credit ratings of the Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi Ltd. and three other Japanese banks were cut to the lowest level by Standard & Poor's as a sluggish economy and billions of dollars of bad loans squeeze their profits.

"This proves that Japan's problems are far from over," said Hans Boman, chief currency trader at Swedbank in New York, who predicted other banks could be downgraded.

S&P also cut the ratings of Asahi Bank Ltd., Daiwa Bank Ltd., and Long-Term Credit Bank of Japan Ltd. Two of these, Daiwa and LTCB, are now one step above "junk" status.

Financial troubles elsewhere in Asia are likely to load these banks with some of the region's biggest lenders - with even more bad loans, S&P said. The banks are "so preoccupied" with bad loans at home they haven't dealt with the impact from Asia's financial crisis, said Ernest Napier, managing director at S&P.

The move is the latest blow to Japan's banking industry, which is burdened by an estimated 77 trillion yen (\$592 billion) of bad loans from speculative investments in the late 1980s. A decade ago, these same banks, considered the world's strongest, bought up assets across the globe.

The rating on Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi, the world's biggest bank, was cut to "A" from "A-". And Asahi's rating was lowered to "BBB" from "A-". Daiwa and LTCB's ratings were cut to "BBB" from "BBB-".

The news contributed to the

yen's biggest drop in almost seven months against the dollar. The US currency rose to 130.17 yen from 128.38 yen late yesterday. The ratings outlook on Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi is now stable, while the outlook for Asahi, Daiwa, and LTCB is negative, S&P said.

Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi said in Tokyo the bank will have no comment on the downgrade. Nobody was available at the other three banks.

The banks' credit ratings have taken a slide since their late 1980s heyday. Mitsubishi Bank - a separate institution before the 1995 merger with Bank of Tokyo - was rated "AAA" as recently as 1991. LTCB fell seven notches in the last seven years from "AAA."

S&P's investment-grade ratings have ten levels from "AAA" to "BBB-." Another dozen ratings are below those, spanning "BBB+" to "D," and are considered junk.

Japanese banks are moving to write off their bad loans, but some analysts accuse them of dragging

their feet. Nine of the biggest banks are expected to write off more than 6 trillion yen in bad debt by the end of the fiscal year on March 31. Those write-offs have left many Japanese banks with capital-to-asset ratios just above the 8 percent minimum set by the Bank for International Settlements in Switzerland.

The downgrade highlights the sorry state of Japanese banks just days before the nation kicks off a series of financial reforms on April 1 under the so-called "Big Bang" deregulation plan championed by Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto.

"Japan's banks are really not poised to enter the competitive environment of global banking over the next five to 10 years," said Stuart Hosansky, who helps manage \$3 billion of bonds at CoreStates Investment Advisors.

After Big Bang, "these banks are probably going to lose substantial amounts of investment money that people have with them."

(Bloomberg)

Israel Airports Authority

Ben Gurion 2000 Project

Public Tender No. C401004 Airsides Terminal Building Contract

The Israel Airports Authority (IAA) hereby invites bids from qualified bidders meeting the below listed preconditions for the construction of the Airsides Terminal Building for the Ben Gurion 2000 Project. The work of this contract generally includes performing and managing all structural, architectural, plumbing and fire protection systems and components.

Preliminary Mandatory Requirements: This list summarizes the preconditions for a bidder's proposal to be considered by the IAA. Only the complete language of the preconditions as stated in the RFP is binding. This text may be obtained by written request, submitted on company letterhead, to the PMF fax number stated below.

1. Bidder's minimum annual revenue in each of the last three years was not less than the equivalent of US\$65 million (sixty-five million).
2. Bidder's records must indicate the cost paid directly for labor for at least 600 persons for each of the last three years (annual average).
- 3a. Bidder must have completed not less than two non-residential projects of 70,000 square meters each within the last five years; or
- 3b. Not less than one non-residential project of 70,000 sq. m. and two non-residential projects of not less than 35,000 sq. m. each within the last five years.
4. Bidders shall meet the staffing and personnel experience requirements specified in the RFP, Exhibit A.
5. Bidder shall meet the registration requirements for a legal entity stated in the RFP, Exhibit A.
6. Bidder shall meet the State of Israel Contractors registration requirements stated in the RFP, Exhibit A.
7. Bidder shall meet the VAT and Israeli Tax Authorities registration requirements stated in the RFP, Exhibit A.
8. Bidder shall provide an unconditional Bank Guarantee in the amount of NIS20 million (twenty million new Israeli shekels), valid for a minimum of ninety days from the Bid Submission date, in the form specified in the RFP.
9. Joint ventures are permitted to participate in the Tender in accordance with the conditions stated in the RFP, Part B, Section 2 and Exhibit A.
10. A bidder who is a foreign entity shall additionally provide a Commercial Cooperation Undertaking Agreement.

Additional Preliminary Requirements:
Participation in the Tender Process is subject to the bidder satisfying all the Preliminary Requirements as detailed in the Mandatory Tender Regulations (1993), Clause 8(a), (1), (2) and (3).
Tender Documents: Tender documents may be purchased until the proposal submission date for the non-refundable sum of NIS 19,500 (nineteen thousand and five hundred), including VAT.
Tender documents are available from the Project Management Firm (PMF) Project Office, located at Ben Gurion International Airport, starting March 30, 1998 between the hours of 9 a.m. and 12 noon, on business days (Sunday through Thursday).
Interested bidders must contact the PMF Contracts Administrator, Mr. Zvi Peretz Cohen at telephone number 972-3-977-4488 (fax number 972-3-977-2956) a minimum of 48 hours in advance to arrange site access. Interested parties may preview the Tender Documents prior to their purchase.
All qualifying bids should be delivered in sealed envelopes/packages not later than 10 a.m. local time on or before June 18, 1998 to the appropriate tender box located in the Archive of the Airports Authority, Main Office, 2nd floor, room no. 113, Ben Gurion International Airport, Israel.
A pre-proposal conference will be held at the Ben Gurion 2000 Project Site Offices on May 5, 1998 at 10 a.m. to clarify provisions in the RFP documents, to summarize and present the Project and to respond to written questions posted by bidders. Bidders are strongly encouraged to attend, but participation is not mandatory. Site access must be arranged in advance as stated in the RFP. The IAA is not bound to accept the lowest bid or any bid whatsoever.

Israel Airports Authority

Ben Gurion 2000 Project

Public Tender No. C4030048 Landside Terminal Electrical Contract

The Israel Airports Authority (IAA) hereby requests proposals from qualified bidders meeting the below listed preconditions for the construction of the Landside Terminal Electrical Work for the Ben Gurion 2000 Project. The work of this contract generally includes performing and managing the low voltage electrical distribution system, connections to electrical and mechanical panels and building lighting.

Preliminary Mandatory Requirements: This list summarizes the preconditions for a bidder's proposal to be considered by the IAA. Only the complete language of the preconditions as stated in the RFP is binding. This text may be obtained by written request, submitted on company letterhead, to the PMF fax number stated below.

1. Bidder's minimum annual revenue in each of the last three years was not less than the equivalent of US\$12 million (twelve million).
2. Bidder's records must indicate for each of the last three years the cost paid directly for labor for at least 100 persons (annual average).
3. Bidder must have a minimum of six years' experience in electrical construction work and completed:
(a) Not less than three low voltage projects of 4000A/400V within the last eight years; or
(b) Not less than two non-residential electrical system projects of not less than 30,000 square meters, excluding warehouse and parking facilities, each within the last five years.
4. Bidders shall meet the staffing and personnel experience requirements specified in the RFP, Exhibit A.
5. Bidder shall meet the registration requirements for a legal entity stated in the RFP, Exhibit A.
6. Bidder shall meet the State of Israel Contractors registration requirements stated in the RFP, Exhibit A.
7. Bidder shall meet the VAT and Israeli Tax Authorities registration requirements stated in the RFP, Exhibit A.
8. Bidder shall provide an unconditional Bank Guarantee in the amount of NIS3 million (three million new Israeli shekels), valid for a minimum of ninety days from the Bid Submission date, in the form specified in the RFP.
9. Joint ventures are permitted to participate in the Tender in accordance with the conditions stated in the RFP, Part B, Section 2 and Exhibit A.
10. A bidder who is a foreign entity shall additionally provide a Commercial Cooperation Undertaking Agreement.

Additional Preliminary Requirements:
Participation in the Tender Process is subject to the bidder satisfying all the Preliminary Requirements as detailed in the Mandatory Tender Regulations (1993), Clause 8(a), (1), (2) and (3).
Tender Documents: Tender documents may be purchased until the bid submission date for the non-refundable sum of NIS13,000 (thirteen thousand), including VAT.
Tender documents are available from the Project Management Firm (PMF) Project Office, located at Ben Gurion International Airport, starting March 30, 1998 between the hours of 9 a.m. and 12 noon, on business days (Sunday through Thursday).
Interested bidders must contact the PMF Contracts Administrator, Mr. Amnon Yagupat at telephone number 972-3-977-4464 (fax number 972-3-977-2956) a minimum of 48 hours in advance to arrange site access. Interested parties may preview the Tender Documents prior to their purchase.
All qualifying bids should be delivered in sealed envelopes/packages not later than 10 a.m. local time on or before May 19, 1998 to the appropriate tender box located in the Archive of the Airports Authority, Main Office, 2nd floor, room no. 113, Ben Gurion International Airport, Israel.
A pre-proposal conference will be held at the Ben Gurion 2000 Project Site Offices on April 21, 1998 at 10 a.m. to clarify provisions in the RFP documents, to summarize and present the Project and to respond to written questions posted by bidders. Bidders are strongly encouraged to attend, but participation is not mandatory. Site access must be arranged in advance as stated in the RFP. The IAA is not bound to accept the lowest bid or any bid whatsoever.

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Marlins: Wait 'til last year; Brewers give NL new look

NEW YORK (AP) — The cigar smoke hung heavy, and so did the hearts of the Florida Marlins players when they gathered for that final time.

Hours after Edgar Renteria's 11th-inning single won the World Series, and well after the wild celebration ended, the Marlins and their staff retreated to the clubhouse at Pro Player Stadium.

It was there in the quiet that, one by one, they took emotional turns talking about how special 1997 had been, fully aware that big changes were coming.

But could anyone have predicted just how different things would look in the National League in 1998? The Marlins are broken up and Milwaukee is back in. The only constant is Atlanta, which is always, is the team to beat.

Florida shed 12 members of the 25-man roster that beat Cleveland in October, including Kevin Brown, Moises Alou and Robb Nen, in a salary purge of historic proportions.

Bobby Bonilla, one of the few big names who did not get dumped, was met at spring training by 6-foot-5 rookie Derek Lee, one of the many young players the Marlins acquired during the offseason.

"Is that our first baseman?" Bonilla said. "He needs to eat a little. He's skinny. Not enough meal money — they must be really cutting back."

The Marlins' dismantling leaves the Braves as the clear-cut favorites in the East.

The Brewers, meanwhile, become the first team to switch leagues this century by joining the NL Central. Milwaukee is no stranger to the NL, having had the Braves until 1965.

In the West, a pitching duel favors the Dodgers.

A look at the NL in predicted order of finish:

EAST
Atlanta Braves
Just give the Braves a bye and put them in the playoffs. It should be that easy for the team that Ted Turner — and great pitching — built.

Oh, there are a few problems. Andruw Jones (.231, 107 strikeouts in 399 at-bats) is not an ideal leadoff man, especially for a club that has had Kenny Lofton and Marquis Grissom. And middle relief is shaky. *See "in" most places, with Mike Cameron, Kerry Ligonier and Alan Embree.*

Of course, with the best starting staff in the majors, why worry? Greg Maddux (19-4, 2.20 ERA), Denny Neagle (league-leading 20 wins), Tim Lincecum (14-7, 2.96 ERA) and John Smoltz (3.02 ERA), coming back from elbow surgery, assure Atlanta of being close in every game.

Dennis Martinez, whose career looked like it was over, comes back at 42 with 241 lifetime wins. Mark Wohlers (33 saves) returns as the closer.

With so much pitching, Braves hitters often get overlooked. That could change with the addition of free agent Andres Galarraga (.318, 41 HRs, 140 RBIs) to a lineup featuring Chipper Jones (111 RBIs), Ryan Klesko (84 RBIs) and Javy Lopez (23 HRs).

New York Mets
Coming off their first winning season since 1990, the Mets are no longer wondering what would happen if Jason Irwin, Paul Wilson and Bill Pulisic were all healthy enough to pitch.

Instead, they're looking to a bright future, and for good reason. Bobby Jones (15-9), newcomer Al Leiter (11-9 for Florida) and Rick Reed (13-9) head a rotation that is talented, if not spectacular. John Franco (36 saves) is still effective at 37, and lefty specialist Dennis Cook (9 scoreless innings in postseason for Florida) fills a

big need in the bullpen.

How well the Mets do may depend on their hitters, particularly whether they can overcome the loss of injured catcher Todd Hundley (30 HRs) until the All-Star break. Edgardo Alfonzo (.315) and Benji Hershiser (24 HRs) are on their way up and Carlos Baerga (.281) and John Olerud (.102 RBIs) are fine.

But which way will Brian McRae (.242) and Bernard Gilkey (.249) go?

Montreal Expos
This was not what Expos fans wanted to hear, even if general manager Jim Beattie was telling the truth — as evidenced by 14 straight losses in spring training.

"We do not intend to win next year. We intend to build to have a championship club when we move into our stadium in 2001," he said after trading NL Cy Young winner Pedro Martinez and second baseman Mike Lansing.

Martinez and Lansing were joined by Henry Rodriguez, David Segui and Darin Fletcher departing town. In return, the Expos got top pitching prospect Carl Pavano (11-6 in Triple-A) from Boston and not much else.

Vladimir Guerrero (.302), Rondell White (28 HRs), Mark Grudzielanek (54 doubles) and Carlos Perez (12-13) and manager Felipe Alou are the best of the bunch left, for now. By the summer, it should be known whether the whole team will leave for a more stable future.

Philadelphia Phillies
The good news: After posting the worst record in the majors in the first half last year, the Phillies had the fourth-best mark in the second half. The bad news: Second-half surges need first-half surges.

That said, the Phils should slightly improve on last year's 68-94 finish, even with the departure of double-play combo Mickey Morandini and Kevin Stocker.

Cur Schilling set an NL record for right-handers with 319 strikeouts. He'll need help from Matt Beech, Mike Grace and off-injured Tyler Green to keep Philadelphia from another last-place finish.

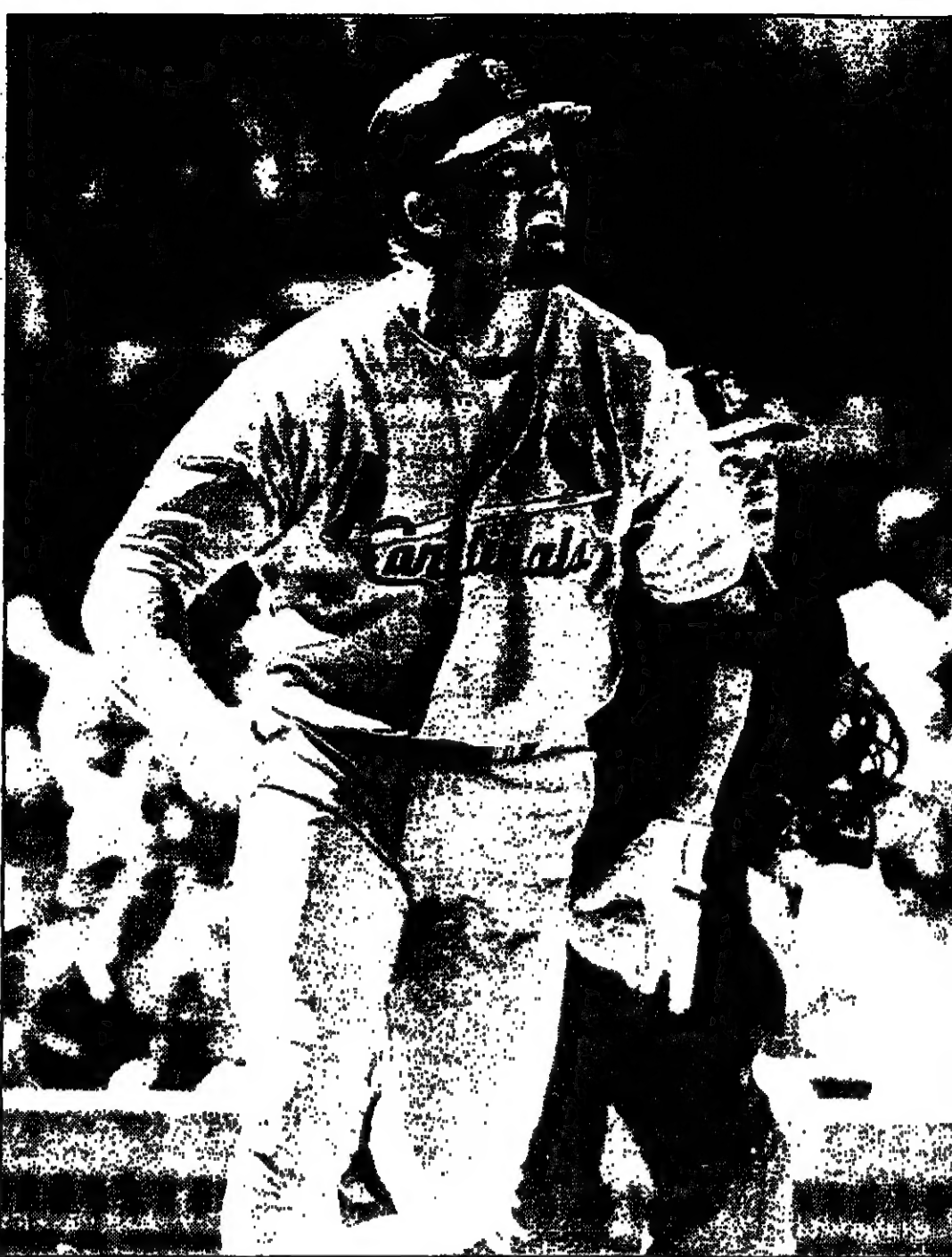
Ricky Bottalico (34 saves) has struggled — perhaps the Phils should have traded him to Seattle last summer for Jose Cruz Jr. Scott Rolen (.283, 21 HRs, 92 RBIs) became the Phillies' first NL Rookie of the Year since Richie Allen in 1964. SS Deshaun Brown and RF Bob Abreu are the new youngsters to watch.

Also worth watching is the fate of Lenny Dykstra, 35, who's been injured since early 1996. He wants to play, but newly acquired Doug Glavine (.300) is in center field.

Florida Marlins
A philosophical question here: Say you could have a team for only one year, knowing it would win the World Series but then immediately break up forever. Would you take it? How about it, Chicago and Cleveland? You haven't won it all for a half-century and longer. Would it be worth it? Marlins fans will provide an answer this season.

Even with World Series-NC MVP Livan Hernandez (9-3), Edgar Renteria (.277), Gary Sheffield (21 HRs), Bobby Bonilla (96 RBIs) and Gold Glove catcher Charles Johnson wearing teal, this club could be terrible.

Bravo for manager Jim Leyland. He stayed in south Florida, even though he's stuck with a no-name rotation that includes the likes of Medina (Rafael), Meadows (Brian) and Ludwick (Eric) and a bullpen that has Darrenburg (Vic), Gonzalez (Gabe) and Sanchez (Jesus).



CHASING ROGER — Much attention will be paid to Cardinals' Mark McGwire's pursuit of Roger Maris's season record 61 home runs.

CENTRAL

St. Louis Cardinals
No predictions from Tony La Russa this time. No, the lawyer-manager learned his lesson last year, when he boasted the Cardinals would repeat as division champions and instead saw them slip to 73-89.

La Russa, however, has many reasons to feel confident about this year, the biggest one being Mark McGwire. The majors' most feared slugger hit 24 home runs in only 51 games for St. Louis, and all of baseball is poised to watch him challenge Roger Maris' record of 61.

A healthy Brian Jordan in right field will boost St. Louis' chances. He had 104 RBIs in 1996 before injuries limited him to 10 RBIs last year.

La Russa's main job will be replacing Alan Benes in the rotation, who wound up in Arizona after a sticky contract situation was resolved. Todd Stottlemyre (12-9) and young Matt Morris (12-9) along with injured Alan Benes (9-9) and Donovan Osborne (3-7) will have to make up the slack.

The Cards reshuffled their bullpen, losing Dennis Eckersley, Tony Fossas and Rick Honeycutt while adding Jeff Brantley and Kent Bottenfield. Brantley had 44 saves in 1996 for Cincinnati but was injured most of '97 and had some problems this spring.

Houston Astros
Imagine you're the Astros general manager. Would you have traded Darryl Kile for Moises Alou this winter? That's not exactly what Gerry Hunsicker did after Houston won the NL Central, but it's close. He got Alou in a deal

Opening Day NATIONAL LEAGUE

Philadelphia at N.Y. Mets
San Diego at Cincinnati
Milwaukee at Atlanta
Los Angeles at St. Louis
Chicago Cubs at Florida
San Francisco at Houston
Colorado at Arizona

with Florida, then watched Kile sign as a free agent with Colorado. The swap is sure to hurt. Alou (115 RBIs) fits in neatly with Craig Biggio (.309, 47 SBs, 146 runs), Jeff Bagwell (43 HRs, 135 RBIs), unpredictable Derek Bell (71 RBIs) and up-and-coming OF Richard Hidalgo (78 RBIs in Triple-A), although the Astros could little afford to lose Kile.

In addition to his 19 wins, Kile pitched 255½ innings. His departure leaves Mike Hampton (15-10) as the only Houston pitcher to win at least 10 games. Shane Reynolds (9-10) needs to get close to his 16 wins of '96.

Closer Billy Wagner set a major league record with 14.4 strikeouts per nine innings despite a late-season slump. Manager Larry Dierker will be hard-pressed to duplicate the deep bullpen after Tom Martin, Russ Springer, John Hudek and Donnie Wall left.

Milwaukee Brewers
Enough with the jokes about the Brewers being confused by double-switches and being lost without the DH. With longtime NLer Phil Garner managing, Milwaukee will have little trouble adjusting to the new league. And DH Dave Nilsson (20 HRs), a former catcher who became an outfielder, will move back to left when his injured knee recovers.

The notoriously low-budget Brewers spent big bucks in trading for Marquis Grissom (.262, 22 SBs for Cleveland) and re-signing Jeremy Burnitz (27 HRs). Not much changed on the mound where Cal Eldred (13-15) and Doug Jones (36 saves) are the best.

Milwaukee might find it a bit easier in the NL Central than the AL Central, where Cleveland was too tough. Fans at County Stadium will enjoy the switch, with the club likely to top its record for season tickets.

Pittsburgh Pirates
The payroll is rising in Pittsburgh and the crowds are getting bigger at Three Rivers Stadium. Can the glory days of the early '90s be far behind? Actually, they are. Because as long as the Pirates can't compete with the millions spent by bigger-market clubs, it's going to be hard to contend.

Pittsburgh became the sentimental favorite in the majors last year, with Tony Womack (league-leading 50 SBs), Kevin Young (.300), Jason Kendall (.294) and the entire team making less money than Albert Belle. Together, they stayed in the race until the final week.

While most clubs are searching for young pitchers, the Pirates have them. Jason Schmidt (10-9), Estaban Loaiza (11-11) and Jon Lieber (11-14) are all better than their records indicate.

Chicago Cubs
Suffice to say, these new-look Cubs will get off to a better start this year. Then again, they set an NL record by going 0-14 last

April. Give the Cubbies credit, they tried to address most of their problems. Needing a power hitter, they traded for Henry Rodriguez (26 HRs). Needing to replace 2B Ryne Sandberg and upgrade at shortstop, they got Mickey Morandini (.295) and Jeff Blauser (.308).

Needing a closer, they signed Rod Beck (37 saves). Sammy Sosa (.36 HRs, 119 RBIs), Mark Grace (.319) and Lance Johnson (.307) should ensure Chicago improves from 12th in NL scoring.

Still, the main trouble is on the mound. Kevin Tapani (9-3) and Mark Clark (14-8) need help and it might come — next year — from top prospect Kerry Wood. Beck's success depends on whether his fastball can top 90 mph.

The Cubs will certainly do better than last year's 68-94 mark. Even so, fans at the Friendly Confines already have absorbed a disheartening loss — Wrigley Field will never be the same without Harry Caray singing *Take Me Out to the Ball Game*.

Cincinnati Reds
During his recent talk to the team's minor leaguers, Pete Rose urged them to "Win and get the Cincinnati Reds back on the map." That little speech caught the attention of baseball management, which reprimanded the Reds as Rose broke the terms of his lifetime ban. Now, let's see if his words will work any magic on the field.

Barry Larkin (.317 in 73 games) is out with a neck injury and Deion Sanders (56 SBs) is out of baseball, for now. The offense that ranked last in the NL in runs also lost Hal Morris, and will have a hard time this time unless Reggie Sanders (.253, 19 HRs) breaks loose.

Brent Tomko (11-7, 3.43 ERA) could emerge as an ace. Jeff Shaw led the league with 42 saves, but might have many leads to protect.

WEST
Los Angeles Dodgers
The Dodgers sure made their share of news before opening day, from the sale to Rupert Murdoch to Brett Butler's criticism of Mike Piazza. Look for L.A. to keep making headlines well into October.

The best rotation in the majors, besides the Braves gets even stronger when Daren Dreifort (48 games, 2.86 ERA) joins Ramon Martinez (10-5), Chan Ho Park (14-8), Hideo Nomo (14-12) and unlucky Ismael Valdes (10-11, 2.65 ERA).

Piazza (.362, 40 HRs, 124 RBIs) had the best batting average for a catcher since Yankees Hall of Famer Bill Dickey in 1936. Eric Karros (104 RBIs), out for several weeks with a bad knee, newly signed Raul Mondesi (.310) and Todd Zelle (31 HRs) provide pop.

Paul Konerko (37 HRs in Triple-A) could become the 10th Dodgers player to win the Rookie of the Year award in 20 years.

San Diego Padres
Like most teams, San Diego went looking for a No. 1 starter in 1997. Unlike most clubs, the Padres got their man in Kevin Brown.

Brown (16-8, 2.69 ERA) gives the Padres their first bona fide ace since, well, maybe Gaylord Perry and a good shot at the wild-card spot.

Provided his sinker is still sharp at 33, Brown will lead a rotation that includes Joey Hamilton (12-7), Andy Ashby (9-11) and Sterling Hitchcock (10-11). The off-injured Mark Langston also is in the mix.

Trevor Hoffman (37 saves) remains one of baseball's best — and least known — relief aces.

The bullpen could use depth, and newcomers Brian Boehringer, Ed Vosberg and Dan Miceli may bring it.

Tony Gwynn (.372, career-high 119 RBIs) won his eighth batting title, tying him with Honus Wagner for the most in league history.

Ken Caminiti (26 HRs, 90 RBIs) dipped from his MVP season, although offense was not a problem for the Padres.

Colorado Rockies
Darryl Kile figures to be the most closely watched pitcher in the majors this season.

If he succeeds, a flock of other aces might follow him to Coors Field. If he flops, the Rockies might never sign another top free agent to pitch in Denver.

Kile (19-7) left the comfort of the Astrodome for the land where hitters rule. Provided his curve doesn't flatten out in the mile high air, he could break the team record of 17 wins held by Kevin Ritz.

While Kile, Mike Lansing (88 RBIs) and relievers Chuck McElroy and Dave Veres were arriving, Andres Galarraga and Walt Weiss were leaving.

NL MVP Larry Walker (.366, 49 HRs, 130 RBIs) has recovered from elbow surgery and Dante Bichette (118 RBIs) bulked up during the offseason. Hitting, however, never has been a problem for the team that ranked No. 1 in runs and last in ERA.

San Francisco Giants
They ranked 10th in the NL in batting, were ninth in ERA and were outscored by their opponents. Even after winning the West, most people were having trouble figuring out how Barry Bonds and the Giants did it.

Baseball's biggest surprise in '97, it will be no shock to see San Francisco slip back into the pack this season, even with a team that's not too bad.

Bonds (40 HRs, 101 RBIs, 37 SBs, 145 walks) can still give Ken Griffey Jr. a run for best-in-the-majors honors. Jeff Kent (121 RBIs) and J.T.

Snow (104 RBIs) became the first Giants trio to each drive in 100 runs since Johnny Mize, Walker Cooper and Willard Marshall did it at the Polo Grounds in 1947.

The boldest offseason move came in the bullpen, where the Giants let loose Rod Beck and Roberto Hernandez and traded for Robb Nen.

Also new is Orel Hershiser (14-6 for Cleveland), once a member of the hated Dodgers.

Arizona Diamondbacks
Owner Jerry Colangelo promises his team will not look like a typical expansion team, and that will be obvious on opening day.

Ace Andy Benes will throw the first pitch. All-Star Matt Williams will bat cleanup, former AL manager of the year Buck Showalter will be in the dugout and the \$365 million Bank One Ballpark — complete with a swimming pool beyond the outfield fence — will be sold out.

Fueled by Colangelo's cash, Arizona might do what none of baseball's 12 expansion teams since 1961 has done: finish within 20 games of 500. The Diamondbacks may well do better than Tampa Bay, too, but desert dreams of a postseason spot are merely a mirage.

Benes (9-9 for St. Louis), Willie Blair (16-8 for Detroit) and Brian Anderson (4-2 for Cleveland) highlight the rotation. The bullpen is dry, though, with no one who earned more than three saves last year.

Williams (105 RBIs for Cleveland), Jay Bell (career-high 92 RBIs) and Devon White provide a solid top to the lineup.

Sri Lanka batsmen begin to collapse vs. South Africa

CENTURION, SA (Reuters) — Sri Lanka collapsed to 93 for seven at close on the third day of the second Test against South Africa yesterday.

Sri Lanka, with three second innings standing, have an overall lead of 196 after South Africa were earlier dismissed for just 200 despite a century from Daryll Cullinan.

South African pace bowler Allan Donald, celebrating his 200th Test wicket, ripped through Sri Lanka's top three batsmen and ended with three for 45.

Donald bowled Sanath Jayasuriya for 16, trapped Roshan Mahanama lbw next ball and then had Marvan Atapattu caught behind to reduce Sri Lanka to 40-3. And worse was to come.

The next three batsmen were all dismissed for nought as Hansie Cronje's medium pacers accounted for Arjuna Ranatunga and Hashan Tillekeratne and Romesh Kaluwitharana was run out by substitute fielder Derek Crookes.

Donald joined two of the game's most exclusive clubs with the wicket of Jayasuriya. It was his 200th test wicket — he is the 33rd man to do so but the first South African — and 100th in all first-class cricket, becoming only the third South African to achieve the feat.

Aravinda de Silva, with 41, helped the total reach 85 before he, too, was brilliantly run out by wicket-keeper Mark Boucher, who hit the stumps direct at the non-striker end.

Earlier South Africa, replying to the tourists' first

innings total of 303, were dismissed for just 200.

Muttiah Muralitharan's 12th five-wicket haul in Test cricket was largely responsible.

Off-spinner Muralitharan, turning the ball extravagantly, claimed five for 63 in 30 overs with only 31-year-old Cullinan offering serious resistance.

His chanceless 103 in difficult batting conditions gave South Africa a respectable innings. The second best score of the innings was a meager 13.

It was Cullinan's fifth century, and third against Sri Lanka after scoring 102 in Colombo in 1993 and 113 in the first Test in Cape Town last week.

In all he faced 184 balls and struck 13 boundaries in five hours and seven minutes at the crease.

"It was a fighting century under the circumstances, but it was satisfying that we got to 200. I've just been fortunate to have a good run since Australia," Cullinan said.

"We've also played on two good wickets in the last two tests which has helped, but the break I had really put things into perspective for me," Muralitharan began South Africa's slide from their overnight 75 for three when he removed Cronje for 10, thanks to a sharp stumping from Romesh Kaluwitharana.

Jacques Kallis was dropped twice in three balls off Muralitharan before an attempted back foot drive against seamer Pramodya Wickremasinghe was held.

South Africa lost their last six wickets for just 97 runs and the game goes into its fourth day evenly poised.



AND STILL CHAMP — Lennox Lewis (l) stops Shannon Briggs in the fifth to record a TKO and defend his WBC heavyweight title in Atlantic City on Saturday. Evander Holyfield holds the WBA and IBC heavyweight crowns.

(Reuters)

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Malone's
scoring
milestone

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National
League
preview

Page 21

Sports Editors
Joe Hoffman & Ori LewisRios claims
top spot

KEY BISCAYNE — Marcelo Rios will dethrone Pete Sampras as the ATP's top-ranked tennis player tomorrow following his 7-5, 6-3, 6-4 victory over Andre Agassi in the Lipton Championships yesterday. Sampras had held the top spot for 102 consecutive weeks.

The 22-year-old, who had been cheered on by a large contingent of fans flowing in from his native Chile, is the first South American to reach No. 1.

Chelsea topple Boro to win League Cup

WEMBLEY (AP) — Gianluca Vialli won his first trophy as a manager yesterday when Chelsea scored a 2-0 League Cup final victory over division one Middlesbrough which lost its third domestic final in 12 months.

Frank Sinclair and Roberto Di Matteo netted goals in the fifth and 16th minutes of extra time with player-manager Vialli, who took over from Ruud Gullit only five weeks ago, watching from the bench.

Vialli, wearing a tie and a smart suit instead of his Chelsea colors, had left himself off the team reportedly to allow other players the chance of savoring a cup final victory at Wembley.

"It's a great day for us. We have done a great job," Vialli said. "I am very happy for the supporters as well as the players."

"I had a great confidence in Sparky (Mark Hughes) Tor (Tor

Andre Flo) and Franco (Gianfranco Zola). I thought that they would play better than me."

Zola paid tribute to Vialli's gesture not to play. "He showed he is a great man," he said. "He could have selected himself because he was playing well. But he thought for the good of the team and everybody appreciates it."

Chelsea also is on course for another title in the European Cup Winners Cup and plays Vicenza in the semifinal on Thursday.

Chelsea's triumph, which followed a 2-0 victory over Middlesbrough in the FA Cup final last season, meant an unhappy trio of cup final losses for Bryan Robson's team, who also lost to Leicester in last season's League Cup final.

It also spoiled Paul Gascoigne's reappearance in English soccer. The England midfielder made his debut for Boro as a substitute after

his transfer from Glasgow Rangers, collected a yellow card within seven minutes and ended up with a loser's medal.

Vialli's absence meant the finalists had two Italians apiece — Gianfranco Zola and Di Matteo for Chelsea and Gianluca Festa and Marco Branca for Boro.

After enterprising play by the division one team in the opening spell, Cup Winners Cup semifinalist Chelsea created three chances in three minutes and Boro's Australian goalkeeper, Mark Schwarzer, had to make two saves.

Chelsea and former Manchester United striker Mark Hughes, playing in his 10th cup final at Wembley, connected perfectly for a first-time, left-foot shot from 12 yards. Schwarzer took off quickly to palm the ball away at the near post.

Zola fluffed a low, left-footer wide of the right hand post from

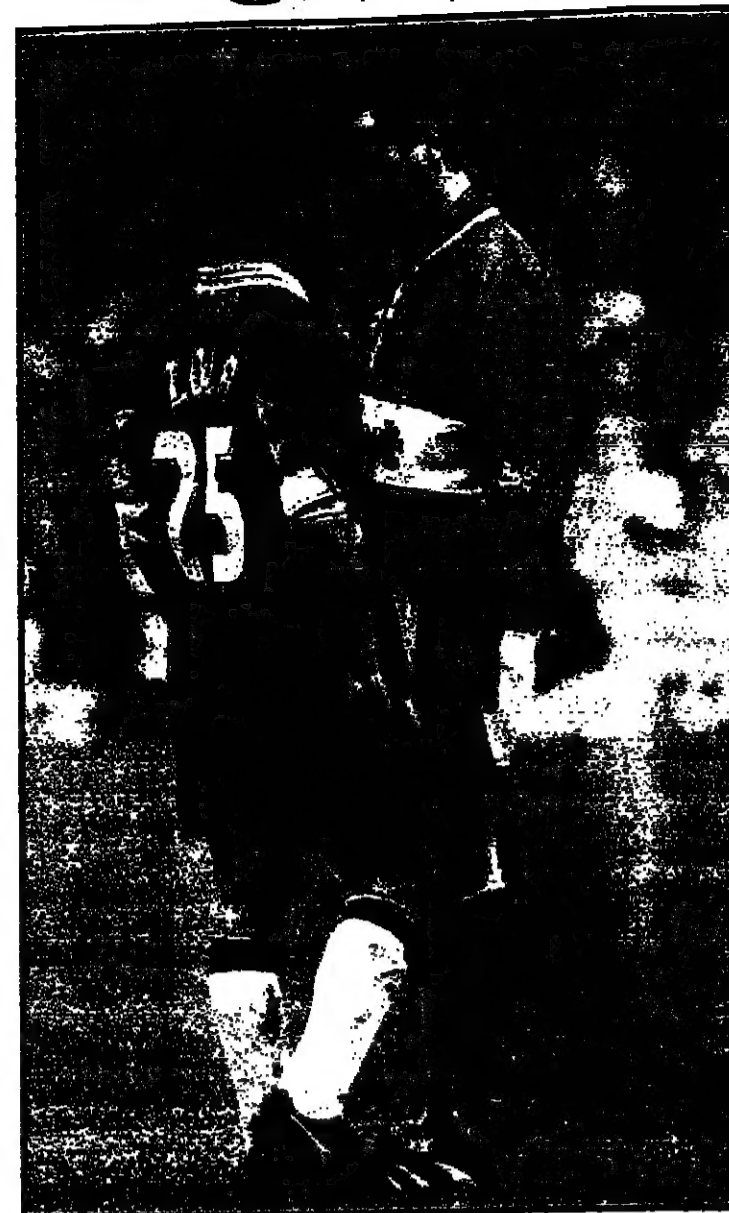
15 yards before Schwarzer was a little lucky to block a weak, close-range header from Hughes.

Two timely interceptions by Sinclair prevented Colombian striker Hamilton Ricard from homing in on the Chelsea goal early in the second half before Zola and Di Matteo both went close in the space of a minute.

Zola curled a 25-yard shot which beat Schwarzer but hit the crossbar and then Di Matteo shaved the post with a 30-yarder.

Gascoigne made his first appearance in English soccer for seven years when he replaced Ricard after 64 minutes and was shown the yellow card within seven minutes for clattering Zola's legs from behind.

Two minutes later Chelsea captain Denis Wise was shown the yellow card for crashing into Gascoigne as the game threatened to overboil.



J'ACCUSE — Chelsea's Gianfranco Zola and Boro's Paul Gascoigne have a standoff after Gazza was booked for rough play. (Reuters)

Safety probe launched following killing

LONDON (Reuters) — English second division club Gillingham are to carry out a review of their safety measures following the death of a fan outside the ground at Saturday's match against Fulham.

Gillingham chairman Paul Scally, who described the incident as "a terrible tragedy," said the club's safety committee would be meeting to look at its procedures.

A 24-year-old Fulham supporter died outside the stadium after rival fans clashed fol-

lowing Saturday's game which Gillingham won 2-0.

A local police spokesman named the dead man as Matthew Fox from Purley, south London and confirmed that he had died as a result of head injuries.

Three men were being questioned yesterday in connection with the killing. Several other people were also taken to hospital after skirmishes both inside and outside the stadium, although none was seriously hurt, the police

spokesman said.

The English Football Association, said to be "appalled and horrified" by the incident, will await the results of the police investigation before deciding what action to take.

The FA is also set to launch its own investigation into the crowd trouble that marred Saturday's Premier League match between Barnsley and Liverpool, where a fan ran onto the pitch and apparently tried to attack referee Gary Willard.

Utah, Kentucky in NCAA final

Utah stunned top-ranked North Carolina 65-59 Saturday to earn a spot in Monday's NCAA Tournament final against

Kentucky, which eked out an 86-85 overtime nailbiter against Stanford.

"It's nice to see that the two teams that are playing the best at the end of the year are going at it for a national championship," said Utah guard/forward Drew Hansen.

Full story, Page 22

Motzkin back in
second division

By ELI GRONER

What goes up must come down. One year after joining the National Basketball League, Maccabi Kiryat Motzkin joins Maccabi Netanya in booking a return ticket to the second division, after its 85-80 loss in Eilat last night in the league's season finale.

Netanya was officially relegated last week.

Motzkin's game last night took on major importance after Hapoel Holon thrashed Maccabi Ra'anana earlier. Holon's win, coupled with Motzkin's loss, enabled Eli Kaneti's club to leapfrog over Motzkin and maintain its spot in the National League next season.

Holon 69, Ra'anana 51
Judging by the hometown

crowd's reaction — as well as that of some of the players — one would have thought that Holon had just won the championship. In actuality, they hadn't even officially started off relegation, as the games in Rishon and Eilat were far from over. But that didn't stop the well-meaning, if not ignorant fans and players from storming the court and popping the champagne bottles immediately after Holon pulled out the big victory.

Several minutes later, when Rishon had clinched victory over Givat Shmuel (thus ensuring Holon's status in the National League) the celebrations officially began.

Steve Hood tallied 28 points and David Sternlight added 16 in leading the club to victory.

Other scores last night: Eilat 85, Kiryat Motzkin 80; Mac Rishon Lezion 87, Givat Shmuel 78; Hap Jerusalem 95, Bnei Herzliya 81; Galil Elyon 85, Maccabi Netanya 77; Mac Tel Aviv 94, Ramat Gan 88.

Last night's games concluded the regular season. On Sunday the playoffs begin with four best-of-five series: Tel Aviv vs. Ramat Gan; Ra'anana vs. Herzliya; Eilat vs. Rishon; Jerusalem vs. Galil.

Spring Basketball League Final Standings				
	W	L	Pts.	
Maccabi Tel Aviv	22	18	7	37
Maccabi Ra'anana	22	15	7	37
Ramat Gan	22	15	7	37
Rapid Jerusalem	22	14	8	34
Galil Elyon	22	13	9	35
Bnei Herzliya	22	10	12	32
Maccabi Ramat Gan	22	8	14	38
Givat Shmuel	22	7	15	29
Rapid Holon	22	7	15	29
Kiryat Motzkin	22	7	15	29
Maccabi Netanya	22	5	17	27

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